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INTRODUCTORY ESSAYS

TO

SELECT CHRISTIAN AUTHORS.

BY

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PREFACE.

THIS volume consists of a series of Essays, contributed in the form of Prefaces to so many of the works of old Christian authors, republished by Mr COLLINS of Glasgow. They would not have appeared in the present publication, had it not been, that, besides being recommendatory of the Treatises in question, each is taken up with a distinct theological topic, on which we have attempted to bestow an independent treatment of our own.

We esteem it the happy symptom of a wholesome revival in the taste and spirit of the age, that of late there should have been such an increased demand, for the best of those practical writings on Christianity, which made their appearance in the last half of the 17th and first half of the 18th century. We have heard that Mr COLLINS's Series of "Select Christian Authors," which commenced about fifteen years ago, gave a powerful impulse to this revival. Certain it is, that his enterprize has been successfully followed up by

numerous imitations; and it is our delightful confidence, that, both throughout Britain and America, the effect has been, to leaven the public mind anew, with the substantial doctrine, and no less substantial Christian ethics, that flourished at that period—when so many men of profoundest piety, were also men of profoundest acquaintance, both with the lessons of the divine word and with the experimental lessons of human nature.

We cannot look back to that time, which, in spite of all the ridicule that has been awakened by its occasional excesses, was in truth the Augustan age of Christianity in England, without being reminded of the saying that "they were giants in these days"—a character which they have rightfully earned, not more by their prodigious industry than by their colossal powers, on the strength of both which together, they achieved such an amount of active work, along with such a magnitude and number of massive publications. We know not which to admire most—the labour of their incessant ministrations, both in the pulpit and among families; or the labour of their prolific and profound authorship. It is the combination of the two which raises our admiration into wonder; and the feeling is greatly enhanced, when we contemplate the solid worth and quality of the compositions which they have given to the world.

To estimate them intellectually, account should be taken, both of their great discernment into the meaning of Scripture, and their deep insight into the mysteries of the heart. It was the conjunction of these two which so peculiarly qualified them "to give a word in season"—to point out the marvellous correspondence which obtains, between the sayings of the Bible and the countless varieties of life and character in the world; or between the characters graven by the finger of the Almighty on the tablet of an outward revelation, and the characters graven by the same finger on the inward tablet of our own felt and familiar nature. In the language of the schools, they were skilful to adapt the objective to the subjective; or, in the more simple and emphatic language of inspiration, to "manifest the truth of God to the consciences of men."

But it is in estimating them spiritually, that we come best to understand, wherein it was that their great strength lay. What forms the true secret of their effectiveness, is the unction, or moral earnestness, by which their writings are so manifestly pervaded. The good things which proceeded from them, came from the good treasure of hearts quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit. Beside that often they were men of first-rate talent, they generally were men of prayer;

and this brought down an inspiring vigour on the exercises of the closet, as well as on the duties of their public and daily walk. It is thus that a devoted personal Christianity appears in almost every paragraph of the volumes which they have left behind them—those weighty products of great power and great piety—having in them a fragrancy and a force which now are seldom exemplified; and in virtue of which, they have not only been instrumental for the conversion of thousands in the days that are past, but still continue to shed a blessing of the highest order on the churches and families of our present generation.

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

TO

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST;

IN THREE BOOKS.

BY THOMAS A KEMPIS.

We have sometimes heard the strenuous argumentation of the author of the following Treatise in behalf of holiness, excepted against, on the ground that it did not recognise sufficiently the doctrine of justification by faith. There is, in many instances, an over-sensitive alarm on this topic, which makes the writer fearful of recommending virtue, and the private disciple as fearful of embarking on the career of it—a sort of jealousy lest the honours and importance of Christ's righteousness should be invaded, by any importance being given to the personal righteousness of the believer: as if the one could not be maintained as the alone valid plea on which the sinner could lay claim to an inheritance in heaven, and at the same time the other be urged as his indispensable preparation for its exercises and its joys.

It is the partiality with which the mind fastens upon one article of truth, and will scarcely admit the others to so much as a hearing—it is the intent-

ness of its almost exclusive regards on some separate portion of the divine testimony, and its shrinking avoidance of all the distinct and additional portions—it is, in particular, its fondness for the orthodoxy of what relates to a sinner's acceptance, carried to such a degree of favouritism, as to withdraw its attention altogether from what relates to a sinner's sanctification,—it is this which, on the pretence of magnifying a most essential doctrine, has, in fact, diffused a mist over the whole field of revelation; and which, like a mist in nature, not only shrouds the general landscape from all observation, but also bedims, while it adds to the apparent size of the few objects that continue visible. It is the same light which reveals the whole, that will render these last more brightly discernible than before; and whether they be the prominences of spiritual truth, or of visible materialism, they are sure to be seen most distinctly in that element of purity and clearness, through the medium of which the spectator is able to recognise even the smaller features and the fainter lineaments that lie on the ground of contemplation.

It is true, that the same darkening process which buries what is remote in utter concealment, will, at least, sully and somewhat distort the nearer perspective that is before us. But how much more certain is it, that if such be the grossness of the atmosphere as to make impalpable the trees, and the houses, and the hillocks of our immediate vicinity—then will the distant spires, and mountains, and villages, lie buried in still deeper and more hopeless obscurity. And so it is, with revealed

truth: the light of which is spread over a wide and capacious arena, reaching afar from the character of man upon earth to the counsels of God in heaven. When Christ told Nicodemus what change must take place upon the earthly subject, ere it could be prepared for the glories and felicities of the upper sanctuary, he was resisted in this announcement by the incredulity of his auditor. Upon this he came forth with the remonstrance: "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" And then he proceeds to tell of heavenly things,—of the transactions that had taken place in the celestial judicatory above, and which behoved to take place ere the sinner could obtain a rightful entrance into the territory of the blessed and the unfallen; of the love that God bare to the world; of the mission thereto on which He delegated His only and well-beloved Son; of the design of this embassy, and the way in which it subserved the great object of recovering sinners from their state of condemnation. These are proceedings which may properly be referred to the seat of the divine government, and to the principles which operate and have ascendency there. The doctrine of regeneration is fulfilled or verified upon the human spirit, that is intimately and consciously present with us. The doctrine of the atonement, or the manner in which the reconciliation of the guilty is brought into adjustment with the holiness of God, and with what He requires for maintaining the character and the dignity of His jurisprudence, is fulfilled or verified upon the

divine Spirit, whose thoughts and whose ways are inscrutable to man—He not having ascended up into heaven. And the expostulation amounts to this:—If a man believe not in the doctrine of regeneration, how can he believe in the doctrine of the atonement? If he consent not to the one he gives no real credit to the other. He may fancy it, or feign it out to his imagination, but he has no faith in it.

The Bible makes known to us both man's depravity, and God's displeasure against him: and if with the eye of our mind we see not the one truth, which lies immediately at hand, neither with the eye of our mind can we see the other truth, which lies in fathomless obscurity, away from us, among the recesses of that mysterious Spirit, who is eternal and unsearchable. But the Bible also makes known to us, both the renewing process by which man's depravity is done away, and the reconciling process, by which God's displeasure against him is averted. If we believe not the former, neither do we believe the latter. If to our intellectual view, there be a darkness over the terrestrial operation, then is there an equal, or a more aggravated darkness, over that movement which took place in heaven, when the incense of a sweet-smelling savour ascended to the throne, and the wrath of the Lawgiver, who sitteth thereon, was turned away. And what is true of each of these doctrines, regarded abstractly, or in the general, is also true of their personal application. If we *find* not that a renewing process is taking effect upon us, neither ought we to *figure* that we

have any part in the reconciling process. It is possible to conceive the latter, even while the old nature still domineers over the whole man, and its desires are indulged without remorse, or, at least, without any effective resistance. But this conception is not the faith of the mind. It is rather what the old writers would call a figment of the mind. The apostle adverts to unfeigned faith. But surely, if a man shall overlook the near, and dwell in thought, on the unseen distance that is beyond it; if, unmindful of any transition in his own breast from sin to sacredness, he nevertheless shall persist in the confidence of a transition from anger to complacency in the mind of the Divinity towards him; if, without looking for a present holiness on earth, he pictures for himself a future beatitude in heaven—he resembles the man who, across that haze of nature's atmosphere, which wraps all things in obscurity, thinks to descry the realities of the ulterior space, when he has only peopled it with gratuitous imagery of his own. The faith of such a one is feigned. He believes not the earthly things which are enunciated in Scripture; and, therefore, though he should take up with the heavenly things that are enunciated there, they are taken up by the wrong faculty. To him they are not the substantial objects of perception, but the allusions of fancy.

The traveller who publishes of distant countries, that we have never seen, may also have included our own familiar neighbourhood in his tour, and given a place in his description to its customs, and its people, and its scenery. But if his narrative

of the vicinity that is known were full of misrepresentations and errors, we could have no belief in his account of the foreign domains over which he had expatiated. When we believe not what he tells us of our native shire, how can we believe when he tells us of shires or provinces abroad? And by this we may try the soundness of our faith in the divine testimony. It is a testimony which embraces the things of earth and the things of heaven; which teaches us the nature of man as originally corrupt, and requiring a power from above, that may transform it, as well as on the nature of God, as essentially averse to sin, and requiring an atonement that may reconcile and pacify it. If we believe not what is said of the nature of man, and of the doctrine of regeneration that is connected therewith, then we believe not what is said of the nature of God, and of the doctrine of redemption that is connected therewith. We may choose to overlook the former revelation, and stretch our attention onward to the latter, as that with which our fancy is most regaled, or our fears are most effectually quieted into pleasing oblivion. In this way, we may seize on the topic of imputed righteousness, by an effort of desire, or an effort of imagination; but if the man who does so have an unseeing eye towards the topic of his own personal sanctification, he has just as little of faith towards the former article as towards the latter, whatever preference of liking or fancy he may entertain regarding it. It may play around his mind as one of its most agreeable day-dreams, but it has not laid hold of his conviction.

The light that maketh the doctrine which affirms the change of God's mind towards the sinner believingly visible, would also make the doctrine which affirms the change of the sinner's mind towards God believingly visible. If the one be veiled from the eye of faith, the other is at least equally so. It may be imagined by the mind, but it is not perceived. It may be conceived, but it is not credited.

There is a well known publication, called the Traveller's Guide, which you may take as your companion to some distant land, but the accuracy of which you try upon the earlier stages of your journey. If wholly incorrect in the description which it gives of the first scenes through which you pass, you withdraw all your confidence from its representation of the future scenes; and it may even be so wide of the truth, in respect of the things that are present and visible, as should lead you to infer that you are altogether off the road that conducts to the place after which you are aiming. The Bible is a traveller's guide—and it portrays the characters of humility, and self-denial, and virtuous discipline, and aspiring godliness, which mark the outset of the pilgrimage,—and it also portrays the characters of brightness, and bliss, and glory, which mark its termination. If you do not believe that it delineates truly the path of transition in time, neither do you believe, however much you may desiderate and dwell upon the prospect, that it sketches truly, the place of joyful habitation in eternity. Or, at least, you may well conclude, if you are not now on the path of holiness,

that you are not on the path to heaven. And if you believe not the Scripture, when it announces a new spirit as your indispensable preparation here, there may be a dazzling and deceitful imagination, but there is no real belief of what it announces, or of what it promises, about paradise hereafter.

It is thus that we would try the faith of Antinomians. Fancy is not faith. A wilful and determined adherence of the mind to some beatific vision, in which it loves to indulge, is not a believing assent of the mind to what a professed Teacher from heaven has revealed to us of the coming immortality. How can we believe, upon His authority, that we are to enter this region of purity and peace, if we believe not, on the same authority, that the road which leads to it, is a road of mortification, and of new obedience, and of strenuous conflict with the desires and urgencies of nature? If the eye of faith, or of the understanding, be opened on some field of truth that is laid before it, it will not overlook the propinquities of this contemplation, while it only admits the objects which lie on the remoter part of the territory. It is evidence which opens this eye; and that evidence which has failed to open it to what is near, will equally fail to open it to what is distant. But though the eye of the understanding be shut, the eye of the imagination may be open. This requires no evidence, and the man who is without faith in the realities which lie on the other side of death, may nevertheless be all awake in his fancy to those images of bliss with which he has embellished it, and may even possess his own heart with the

pleasing anticipation of it as his destined inheritance. It is not upon his fancy, however, but upon his faith, that the fulfilment of this anticipation will turn,—a faith which, had it been real, would have had respect unto the prescribed road, as well as unto the revealed inheritance,—a faith which would have found him in holiness here, as well as in heaven hereafter. That semblance of it which the Antinomian has is a mere vagary, that may amuse or may harden him in the midst of his present worldliness, but which will be dissipated into nought at the judgment-seat, when for the treacherous phantom which deceived him in time, a tremendous reality will be awarded to him for eternity.

We like not that writer to be violently alleged against, who expounds, and expounds trûly, the amount of Christian holiness, because he says not enough, it is thought, of the warrants and securities that are provided in the gospel for Christian hope. We think, that to shed a luminousness over one portion of the divine testimony, is to reflect, at least, if not immediately to shed, a light on all the other portions of it. The doctrine of our acceptance, by faith in the merits and propitiation of Christ, is worthy of many a treatise, and many are the precious treatises upon it which have been offered to the world. But the doctrine of regeneration, by the Spirit of Christ, equally demands the homage of a separate lucubration—which may proceed on the truth of the former, and, by the incidental recognition of it, when it comes naturally in the way of the author's attention, marks the

soundness and the settlement of his mind thereupon, more decisively than by the dogmatic, and ostentatious, and often misplaced asseverations of an ultra orthodoxy. And the clearer revelation to the eye of faith of one article, will never darken or diminish, but will, in fact, throw back the light of an augmented evidence on every other article. Like any object that is made up of parts, which we have frequently looked to in their connexion, and as making up a whole—the more distinctly one part of it is made manifest, the more forcibly will all the other parts of it be suggested to the mind. And thus it is, that when pressing home the necessity of one's own holiness, as his indispensable preparation for heaven, we do not dissever his mind from the atonement of Christ, but in reality do we fasten it more closely than ever on the necessity of another's righteousness, as his indispensable plea for heaven.

Such we apprehend to be the genuine influence of a Treatise that is now submitted anew to the Christian public. It certainly does not abound in formal and direct avowals of the righteousness which is by faith, and on this account we have heard it excepted against. But we know of no reading that is more powerfully calculated to shut us up unto the faith—none more fitted to deepen and to strengthen the basis of a sinner's humility, and so reconcile him to the doctrine of salvation in all its parts, by grace alone—none that, by exhibiting the height and perfection of Christian attainments, can better serve the end of prostrating the inquirer into the veriest depths of self-abasement, when, on

the humbling comparison of what he is, with what he ought to be, he is touched and penetrated by a sense of his manifold deficiencies. It is on this account that the author of such a work may, instrumentally speaking, do the office of a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ: nor do we know at what other time it is, than when eyeing from afar the lofty track of spiritual and seraphic piety which is here delineated, that we more feel our need of the great High Priest, or that His peace-speaking blood and His perfect righteousness are more prized by us.

But it is not enough that we idly gaze on the heavenly course. We must personally enter it; and it is most utterly and experimentally untrue, that, in the prosecution of this walk, we meet with any thing to darken the principles on which are made to hinge a sinner's justification in the sight of God. He who looks most frequently to Christ, for the purpose of imitation, will also gather most from him on which to prop his confidence, and that too on the right and evangelical basis. There is a sure link of concatenation in the processes of divine grace, by which a growing spiritual discernment is made to emerge out of a growing conformity to the will and the image of the Saviour. These two elements act and re-act the one upon the other. "He that keepeth my commandments to him will I manifest myself." "He whose eye is single shall have his whole body full of light."* "The Holy

* By singleness of eye here, is meant not a single intentness of the mind upon one truth, but, as is evident from the context, that singleness of aim after an interest in heaven, which is not perverted or seduced from its object by the love of a present evil world.

Ghost," who acts as a revealer, "is given to those who obey him." "To him who hath, more shall be given." All proving that there is a procedure in the administration of divine grace, by which he who giveth himself up unto all righteousness is guided unto all truth.

And, it is to be hoped, that while the doctrine of justification is not argued, but rather enhanced and recommended by the perusal of such a work, its own distinct object will be still more directly subserved, of leading some to a more strict and separate devotedness of life, than is often to be met with in this professing age. The severities of Christian practice, which are here urged upon the reader, are in no way allied with the penances and the self-inflictions of a monastic ritual, but are the essentials of spiritual discipline in all ages, and must be undergone by every man who is transformed by the Holy Ghost from one of the children of this world to one of the children of light. The utter renunciation of self—the surrender of all vanity—the patient endurance of evils and wrongs—the crucifixion of natural and worldly desires—the absorption of all our interests and passions in the enjoyment of God—and the subordination of all we do, and of all we feel, to His glory,—these form the leading virtues of our pilgrimage, and in the very proportion of their rarity, and their painfulness, are they the more effectual tests of our regeneration. And one of the main uses of this book is, that while it enforces these spiritual graces in all their extent, it lays open the spiritual enjoyment that springs from the cultivation of them—revealing

the hidden charm which lies in godliness, and demonstrating the sure though secret alliance which obtains between the peace of heaven in the soul, and patience under all the adversities of the path which leads to it. It exposes alike the sufferings and the delights which attach to a life of sacredness: and its wholesome tendency is to reconcile the aspirant after eternal life, to the whole burden of that cross on earth which he must learn to bear with submission and cheerfulness, until he exchanges it in heaven for a crown of glory. Such a work may be of service in these days of soft and silken professorship,—to arouse those who are at ease in Zion; to remind them of the terms of the Christian discipleship, as involving a life of conflict, and watchfulness, and much labour; to make them jealous of themselves, and jealous of that evil nature, the power of which must be resisted, but from the besetting presence of which we shall not be conclusively delivered, until death shall rid us of a frame-work, the moral virus of which may be kept in check while we live, but cannot be eradicated by any process short of dissolution.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

TO

TREATISES

ON THE

LIFE, WALK, AND TRIUMPH OF FAITH.

BY

THE REV. W. ROMAINE, A.M.

THERE is nothing of which some readers of religious books complain more grievously, than that they should be exposed to a constant and wearisome reiteration of the same truths; than that the appetite of the mind for variety should be left to the pain of its own unsated cravings, through the never-failing presentation of some one idea, wherewith, perhaps, it has long ago been palled and nauseated; than that, what they already know should yet again and again be told them—so as to subject their attention to topics that have become tasteless and threadbare, and their minds to a monotony of ideas, that may, at length, be felt to be quite insupportable. This objection has sometimes been urged against Mr ROMAINE'S excellent Treatises on FAITH; and that, precious and important as they acknowledge the truths to be on which he unceasingly delights to expatiate, yet, they consider the frequency of

their recurrence has a tendency to produce in the mind a feeling, if not of weariness, at least of unnecessary repetition.

Now, Paul himself admitted, that to write the same things was not grievous to himself, however grievous it may have been felt by those whom he was in the habit of addressing. And, lest they should have felt his repetitions to be matter of offence or of annoyance, he tries to reconcile them to these repetitions, by affirming, that whether they were agreeable or not, at least they were safe. "To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe."

A process of reasoning gives a most agreeable play and exercise to the faculties. Yet how soon would such a process, if often repeated, feel stale to the intellectual taste. Even the pleasure we had at the first, from the important, and, perhaps, unexpected result to which it had conducted us, would speedily wear off. It would, of course, instantly cease to be unexpected: and as to its importance, we know that this is a property of such truths as are most familiar and most generally recognised: and these, of all others, are least fitted to stimulate the mere understanding. Like the element of water, they may be the most valuable, yet least prized truths by us: and certain it is, that by the unvarying announcement of them, they would, at length, fall in downright bluntness and insipidity on the ear of the inner man. It is thus that a train of argument, the mere object of which is to gain the conviction of the understanding, does not admit of being repeated indefinitely. After having

once carried the conviction, it ceases to be any longer needful—and as to the recreation which is thereby afforded to the intellectual powers, nothing is more certain, than that the enjoyment would speedily decay, should the very same reasoning, and the very same truths, be often presented to the notice of the mind, so as, at length, to flatten into a thing of such utter listlessness, that no one pleasure could be given, and no one power could be awakened by it.

And what is true of a train of argument addressed to the reason, is also true of those images and illustrations which are addressed to the fancy. Whatever delight may have been felt at the original presentation of them, would rapidly subside were they ever and anon to be obtruded on the view. We know of nothing more exquisite than the sensation that is felt when the light of some unexpected analogy, or of some apt and beautiful similitude makes its first entry into the mind. And yet there is a limit to the enjoyment—nor would the attempt to ply the imagination at frequent intervals with one and the same picture be long endured. The welcome which it found from its own intrinsic loveliness, was enhanced by the charm of novelty; but when that charm is dissipated, then is it possible, that, by the mere force of repetition, the taste may decline into languor or even into loathing. Both the reason and the fancy of man must have variety to feed upon; and, wanting this, the constant reiteration of the same principles, and the constant recital of the same poetry, would indeed be grievous.

Yet are there certain appetites of the mind which

have no such demand for variety. It is not with the affections, or the moral feelings, as it is with other principles of our nature. The desire of companionship, for example, may find its abundant and full gratification in the society of a very few friends. And often may it happen of an individual, that his presence never tires—that his smile is the sunshine of a perpetual gladness to the heart—that in his looks and accents of kindness, there is a charm that is perennial and unfading—that the utterance of his name is at all times pleasing to the ear; and the thought of his worth or friendship is felt as a cordial, by the hourly and habitual ministration of which the soul is upheld. The man who expatiates on his virtues, or who demonstrates to you the sincerity of his regards, or who refreshes your memory with such instances of his fidelity as indeed you had not forgotten, but which still you love to be retold—it is but one theme or one topic in which he indulges; and often will he retail in your hearing what substantially are the same things,—yet are they not grievous.

And the tale of another's friendly and favourable inclination to you will not merely bear to be often repeated, because in the conscious possession of friendship there is a perpetual enjoyment, but also because there is in it a constant preservative, and a charm against the discomfort to which a mind, when left to other influences, or to itself, might else be liable. When the heart is desolated by affliction, or harassed with care, or aggrieved by injustice and calumny, or even burdened under the weight of a solitude which it feels to be a weariness,

who would ever think of apprehending lest the daily visit of your best friend should be grievous, because it was the daily application of the same thing? Would not you, in these circumstances, fondly cling to his person, or, if at a distance, would not your heart as fondly cling to the remembrance of him? Would not you be glad to bear up the downward and the desponding tendencies of the heart, by the thought of that unalterable affection, which survived the wreck of your other earthly hopes, and earthly interests? Would not you feel it a service, if any acquaintance of yours were to conduct him in person to your chamber; and there to bring upon you the very smiles that a thousand times before had gladdened your bosom, and the very accents of tenderness that had often, in days which are past, soothed and tranquillized you. Or, if he cannot make him present to you in person, is not a service still rendered, if he make him present to your thoughts? You have no doubt of the alleged friendship, but nature is forgetful, and, for the time being, it may not be adverting to that truth which, of all others, is most fitted to pacify and to console it. The memory needs to be awakened to it. The belief of it may never have been extinguished; but the conception of it may be absent from the mind, and for the purpose of recalling it, the voice of a remembrancer may be necessary. It is thus that the opportune suggestion of a truth, which has long been known, and often repeated, may still the tumults of an agitated spirit, and cause light to arise out of darkness. And who can object to sameness, and to reiteration, in

such a case as this? The same position brought forward again and again, for the mere didactic purpose to convince or to inform, might, however important, soon cease to interest the understanding; and the same image, however beautiful, might, if often presented, soon cease to interest or to affect the fancy,—but the affirmation of a friendship that is dear to your heart, may be repeated as often as is necessary to raise and to prolong the sense of it within you—and, although the theme of every day, still, instead of being grievous on that account, may it be felt like the renewed application of balsam to the soul, with as lively a sense of enjoyment as before, and with a delight that is utterly inexhaustible.

The same holds true of a moral principle. The announcement of it needs not to be repeated with a view to inform; but it may be repeated with a view to influence, and that on every occurrence of temptation or necessity. Were it our only business with virtue to learn what it is, it were superfluous to be told oftener than once, that anger degrades and discomposes him who is carried away by it, and ought to be resisted as alike a violation of duty and of dignity. But as our main business with virtue is to practise it, the very same thing of which by one utterance we have been sufficiently informed, might be often uttered, with propriety and effect, in order that we should be reminded of it. And, accordingly, in some hour of great and sudden provocation, when another's fraud, or another's ingratitude would take full possession of the feelings, and shut out from the mind's regard every element

that had influence to still or to arrest the coming storm, were it not well, if some friendly monitor were standing by, and bidding him be calm? There might not, in the whole of the remonstrance, be one consideration employed, which has not often been recognised, nor one principle urged, which has not been admitted, long ago, into his ethical system, and is perfectly familiar to his understanding, as a sound principle of human conduct. Yet it is not superfluous again to urge it upon him. A practical object is gained by this timely suggestion —and it is the highest function of practical wisdom, not to devise what is new, but seasonably to recall what is old. When, in the heat and the hurry of some brooding fermentation, there is one intense feeling that has taken exclusive occupation of the soul, it is well that some counteractive influence might be poured in, which shall assuage its violence. And this influence, generally, lies not with new truths which are then for the first time apprehended, but with old truths which are then brought to the remembrance. So that, while for the author to repeat the same things is not grievous, for the reader it may be safe.

The doctrine of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, which forms the principal and pervading theme in the following Treatises, possesses a prominent claim to a place in our habitual recollections. And, for this purpose, ought it to be the topic of frequent reiteration by every Christian author; and it may well form the staple of many a Christian treatise, and be the leading and oft-repeated argument of many a religious conversation. It is this which

ushers into the mind of a sinner the sense of God as his Friend and his reconciled Father. That mind, which is so apt to be overborne by this world's engrossments—or to lapse into the dread and distrust of a conscious offender—or to go back again to nature's lethargy, and nature's alienation—or to lose itself in quest of a righteousness of its own, by which it might challenge the reward of a blissful eternity,—stands in need of a daily visiter who, by his presence, might dissipate the gloom, or clear away the perplexity, in which these strong and practical tendencies of the human constitution are so ready to involve it. There is with man an obstinate forgetfulness of God; so that the Being who made him is habitually away from his thoughts. That he may again be brought nigh, there must be an open door of entry by which the mind of man can welcome the idea of God, and willingly entertain it; by which the imagination of Deity might become supportable, and even pleasing to the soul: so that, when present to our remembrance, there should be the felt presence of one who loves and is at peace with us. Now, it is only by the doctrine of the cross that man can thus delight himself in God, and, at the same time, be free from delusion. This is the way of access for man entering into friendship with God, and for the thought of God, as a Friend, entering into the heart of man. And thus it is, that the sound of his Saviour's love carries with it such a fresh and unfailing charm to a believer's ear. It is the precursor to an act of mental fellowship with God, and is hailed as the sound of the approaching

footsteps of Him whom you know to be your Friend.

When the mind, abandoned to itself, takes its own spontaneous and undirected way, it is sure to wander from God; and hence, if without effort, and without watchfulness, will it lapse into a state of insensibility in regard to Him. While in the corrupt and earthly frame of our present tabernacle, there is a constant gravitation of the heart towards ungodliness; and, against this tendency, there needs to be applied the counterpoise of such a force as shall either act without intermission, or by frequent and repeated impulses. The belief that God is your Friend in Christ Jesus, is just the restorative, by which the soul is brought back again from the lethargy into which it had fallen; and the great preservative by which it is upheld from sinking anew into the depths of its natural alienation. It is by cherishing this belief, and by a constant recurrence of the mind to that great truth which is the object of it, that a sense of reconciliation, or the felt nearness of God as your Friend, is kept up in the bosom. And if the mind will not, by its own energies, constantly recur to the truth, it is good that the truth should be frequently obtruded on the notice of the mind. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice." If there be an aptitude in man, which undoubtedly there is, to let slip the things that belong to his peace, it is good to be ever and anon presenting these things to his view, and bidding him give earnest heed unto them. It is not that his judgment would be thereby informed, nor that

his imagination would be thereby regaled, but that his memory would be awakened, and his practical tendency to forget or fall asleep unto these things would be thereby made head against. And thus there are certain things, the constant repetition of which, by Christian writers, ought not to be thought grievous, and at all events is safe.

And there is a perpetual tendency in nature not only to forget God, but also to misconceive Him. There is nothing more firmly interwoven with the moral constitutions of man than a legal spirit towards God, with its aspirings, and its jealousies, and its fears. Let the conscience be at all enlightened, and a sense of manifold deficiencies from the rule of perfect obedience is altogether unavoidable; and so there is ever lurking in the recesses of our heart a dread and a misgiving about God—the secret apprehension of Him as our enemy—a certain distrust of Him, or feeling of precariousness; so that we have little comfort and little satisfaction while we entertain the thought of Him. Were that a mere intellectual error by which we hold the favour of God to be a purchase with the righteousness of man, and so failing in the establishment of such a righteousness, we remained without hope in the world; or were that a mere intellectual error by which we continued blind to the offered righteousness of Christ, and so, declining the offer, kept our distance from the only ground on which God and man can walk in amity together; then, like any other error of the understanding, it might be done conclusively away by one statement or one demonstration. But when, instead of a fault in

the judgment, which might thus be satisfied by a single announcement, it is a perverse constitutional bias that needs to be at all times plied against, by the operation of a contrary influence—then it might not be on the strength of one deliverance only, but by dint of its strenuous and repeated asseveration, that the sense of God as both a just God and a Saviour is upheld in the soul. This might just be the aliment by which the soul is kept from pining under a sense of its own poverty and nakedness—the bread of life which it receives by faith, and delights at all times to feed upon: and just as hunger does not refuse the same viands by which, a thousand times before, it has been met and satisfied, so may the doctrine of Christ crucified be that spiritual food which is ever welcomed by the hungry and heavy-laden soul, and is ever felt to be precious.

The Bible supposes a tendency in man to let slip its truths from his recollection, and, in opposition to this, it bids him keep them in memory, else he might have believed them in vain. It is not enough that they may, at one time, have been received. They must be at all times remembered. "And therefore," says Peter, "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them and be established in the present truth." To know and to be assured is not enough, it would appear. They may at one time have consented to the words which were spoken, but the apostle presented them anew, in order that they might be mindful of the words which were spoken. Those doctrines of

religion which speak comfort, or have an attendant moral influence upon the soul, must at first be learned; but not, like many of the doctrines of science, consigned to a place of dormancy among the old and forgotten acquisitions of the understanding. They stand in place of a kind and valuable friend, of whom it is not enough that he has once been introduced to your acquaintance, but with whom you hold it precious to have daily fellowship, and to be in your habitual remembrance. And this is eminently true of that doctrine which is so frequently reiterated in these Treatises, "that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." It is the portal through which the light of God's reconciled countenance is let in upon the soul. It is the visiter that ushers there the peace and glory of heaven, and, forcing its way through all those cold and heavy obstructions by which the legal spirit has beset the heart of proud yet impotent man—it is the alone truth that can at once hush the fears of guilt, and command a reverence for the offended Sovereign. No wonder, then, that its presence should be so much courted by all who have been touched with the reality and the magnitude of eternal things—by all who have ever made the question of their acceptance with God a matter of earnest and home-felt application; and who, urged on the one hand, by the authority of a law that must be vindicated, and on the other, by the sense of a condemnation that, to the eye of nature, appears inextricable, must give supreme welcome to the message that can assure them of a way by which

both God may be glorified and the sinner may be safe. It is the blood of Christ which resolves this mystery, and it is by the daily application of this blood to the conscience that peace is daily upheld there. When the propitiation by Christ is out of the mind, then, on the strength of its old propensities, does it lapse either into the forgetfulness of God, or into a fearful distrust of Him. And therefore it is, that every aspiring Christian prizes every intimation, and every token of remembrance, by which to recall to his mind the thought of a crucified Saviour. And he no more quarrels with a perpetual sense of Him who poured out His soul unto the death, than he would with the perpetual sunshine of a brilliant and exhilarating day: and just as a joy and a thankfulness are felt at every time when the sun breaks out from the clouds which lie scattered over the firmament—so is that beam of gladness which enters with the very name of Christ, when it finds its way through that dark and disturbed atmosphere which is ever apt to gather around the soul. The light of beauty is not more constantly pleasant to the eye—the ointment that is poured forth not more constantly agreeable in its odour—the relished and wholesome food not more constantly palatable to the ever-recurring appetite of hunger—the benignant smile of tried and approved friendship not more constantly delicious to the heart of man, than is the sense of a Saviour's sufficiency to him of spiritual and new-born desires, who now hungers and thirsts after righteousness.

This may explain the untried and unexpended

delight wherewith the Christian hangs upon a theme which sounds monotonously, and is felt to be wearisome by other men: and this is one test by which he may ascertain his spiritual condition. There is much associated with religion that is fitted to regale even a mind that is unrenewed, if open to the charms of a tasteful, or pathetic, or eloquent representation. And thus it is, that crowds may be drawn around a pulpit by the same lure of attraction which fills a theatre with raptured and applauding multitudes. To uphold the loveliness of the song, might the preacher draw on all the beauties of nature, while he propounds the argument of nature's God: nor need the deep, the solemn interest of tragedy be wanting, with such topics at command as the sinner's restless bed, and the dark imagery of guilt and vengeance wherewith it is surrounded: and again, may the fairest tints of heaven be employed to deck the perspective of a good man's anticipations; or the touching associations of home be pressed into the service of engaging all our sympathies, with the feelings, and the struggles, and the hopes of his pious family. It is thus that the theological page may be richly strewed with the graces of poetry, and even the feast of intellect be spread before us by the able champions of theological truth. Yet all this delight would require novelty to sustain it, and be in full congeniality with minds on which the unction of living water from above had never yet descended. It is altogether diverse from that spiritual taste, by which the simple application of the cross to the sinner's

conscience is felt and appreciated—by which the utterance of the Saviour's name is at all times welcomed like the sound of sweetest music—by which a sensation of relief enters, with all the power and freshness of a new feeling, so often as the conception of His atoning blood, and of His perfect righteousness, is made to visit us—by which the reiteration of His sacrifice upon the ear, has a like effect to disperse the habitual distrust or lethargy of nature, that the ever-recurring presence of a friend has to disperse the gloom of a constitutional melancholy. It is no evidence of his vital Christianity, that a man can enjoy a kindred recreation in those embellishments of genius or literature of which the theme is susceptible. But if its simple affirmations be sweet unto him—if the page be never lovelier in his eye than when gemmed with Bible quotations that are both weighty and pertinent—if when pervaded throughout by a reference to Christ, and to Him crucified, it be felt and rejoiced in like the incense of a perpetual savour, and he, withal a son of learning and generous accomplishment, can love, even in its homeliest garb, the oft-repeated truth; and that, purely because the balm of Gilead is there,—this we should hold the evidence of one who, so far at least, has been enlightened, and has tasted of the heavenly gift, and has been made a partaker of the Holy Ghost, and has tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.

We know of no Treatises where this evangelical infusion so pervades the whole substance of them as those of ROMAINE. Though there is no train

of consecutive argument—though there is no great power or variety of illustration—though we cannot allege in their behalf much richness of imagery, or even much depth of Christian experience. And, besides, though we were to take up any of his paragraphs at random, we should find that, with some little variation in the workmanship of each, there was mainly one ground or substratum for them all—yet the precious and consoling truths, which he ever and anon presents, must endear them to those who are anxious to maintain in their minds a rejoicing sense of God as their reconciled Father. He never ceases to make mention of Christ and of His righteousness—and it is by the constant droppings of this elixir that the whole charm and interest of his writings are upheld. With a man whose ambition and delight it was to master the difficulties of an argument; or with a man whose chief enjoyment it was to range at will over the domains of poetry, we can conceive nothing more tasteless or tame than these Treatises that are now offered to the public. Yet, in despite of that literary nakedness which they may exhibit to the eye of the natural man, who possesses no spiritual taste, and no spiritual discernment, let such a man have his eye opened to the hidden glories of that theme, which, of all others, was dear to the bosom of their author; and, whether from the press or from the pulpit, was the one theme on which he ever loved to expatiate—let the sense of guilt but fasten upon his conscience, and the sure but simple remedy of faith in the blood of Christ recommend itself as that power of

God which alone is able to dissolve it—let him be made to feel the suitableness that there is between this precious application, and that inward disease of which the malignity and the soreness have now been revealed to him—then, like as it is at all times pleasing, when there is laid over a bodily wound the emollient that relieves it, so is it at all times pleasing, whenever the spiritual malady is felt, to have recourse upon that unction by the sprinkling of which it is washed away. A feeling of joy in the Redeemer will be ever prompting to the same contemplations, and to the utterance of the same things. To a regenerated spirit, that never can be a weariness in time, which is to form the song of eternity.

But it is of importance to remark, that the theme on which Mr Romaine so much loves to expatiate, is a purifying as well as a pleasing theme. It is not only not grievous to indulge in it, but, most assuredly, to every true-hearted Christian, it is safe. We are aware of the alleged danger which some entertain of the tendency of such a full and free exhibition of the grace of the gospel, to produce Antinomianism. But the way to avert this, is not by casting any part of gospel truth into the shade. It is to spread open the whole of it, and give to every one part the relief and the prominency that it has in Scripture. We are not to mitigate the doctrines of a justifying faith, and an all-perfect righteousness, because of the abuse that has been made of them by hypocrites—but, leaving to these doctrines all their prominency, we are to place by their side the no less important

and undeniable truths, that heaven is the abode of holy creatures, and that, ere we are qualified for admittance there, we must become holy and heavenly ourselves. Nor is there a likelier way of speeding this practical transformation upon our souls, than by keeping up there, through the blood of Christ, a peace in the conscience, which is never truly done, without a love in the heart being kept up along with it. Those who are justified by faith in the righteousness of Christ, and, in consequence of which, have that peace with God which this author labours so earnestly to maintain in the mind, walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit: and that man's faith in the offered Saviour is not real, nor has he given a cordial acceptance to that grace which is so freely revealed in the gospel, if he do not demonstrate the existence of this faith in his heart, by its operation in his character. A hypocrite may pervert the grace of the gospel, as he will seek a shelter for his iniquities, wherever it can be found. But because he receives it deceitfully, this is no reason why it should be withheld from those who receive it in truth. The truths which he abuses to his own destruction, are, nevertheless, the very truths which serve to aliment the gratitude and the new obedience of every honest believer, who gives welcome acceptance to all things whatsoever that are written in the book of God's counsel, and finds room enough in his moral system for both of the positions—that he is justified by faith, and that he is judged by works.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

TO

THE CHRISTIAN REMEMBRANCER.

BY

AMBROSE SERLE, Esq.

It is quite possible that a doctrine may at one time have been present to our minds, to the evidence of which we then attended, and the truth of which we did in consequence believe; and yet, in the whole course of our future thoughts, may it never again have occurred to our remembrance. This is quite possible of a doctrine in science; and it may also be conceived of a doctrine in theology, that on one day it may have been the object of faith, and never on any succeeding day be the object of memory. In this case, the doctrine, however important, and though appertaining to the very essence of the gospel, is of no use. It is not enough that we have received the gospel, we must stand in it. And it is not enough that we barely believe it, for we are told, on the highest authority, that unless we keep it in memory, we have believed in vain.

This may lead us to perceive that there is an error in the imaginations of those who think, that after having understood and acquiesced in Christian truth, there is an end of all they have to do with it. There

is, with many, a most mischievous repose of mind upon this subject. They know that by faith they are saved, and they look to the attainment of this faith as a terminating good, with the possession of which, could they only arrive at it, they would be satisfied; and they regard the articles of a creed in much the same light that they do the articles of a title-deed, which may lie in their repository for years, without once being referred to; and they have the lurking impression, that if this creed were once fairly lodged among the receptacles of the inner man, and only produced in the great day of the examination of passports, it would secure their entry into heaven—just as the title-deed in possession, though never once looked to, guarantees to them a right to all that is conveyed by it. The mental tablet on which are inscribed their articles of belief, is consigned, as it were, to some place of concealment within them, where it lies in a kind of forgotten custody, instead of hanging out to the eye of the mind, and there made the subject of busy and perpetual observation. It is not like a paper filled with the principles and standing rules of a court, and to which there must be a daily reference for the purpose of daily procedure and regulation. It is more, to make use of a law term, like a paper in *retentis*—perhaps making good to them certain privileges which never will be questioned, or ready to be produced on any remote and distant occasion, when such a measure may be called for. Now this is a very great misconception; and whenever we see orthodoxy contentedly slumbering over its fancied acquisitions, and resting securely

upon the imagination that all its business is now settled and set by, we may be very sure that it is something like this which lies at the bottom of it.

To rectify this wrong imagination, let it never be forgotten, that every where in the Bible, those truths by the belief of which we are saved, have this efficacy ascribed to them, not from the mere circumstance of their having once been believed, but after they are believed, from the circumstance of their being constantly adverted to. The belief of them on the one hand is indispensable; for let this be withheld, and the habitual recurrence of the mind to them is of no more use, than would be its constant tendency to dwell on such fancies as it knew to be chimerical. But this habitual recurrence is just as indispensable; for let this be withheld, and the belief of them were of no more use, than would be that of any other salutary truth, forgotten as to the matter of it, and therefore utterly neglected as to its application. The child who is told of his father's displeasure, should he spend that hour in amusement which is required to be spent in scholarship, may believe this at the time of the announcement. But when the hour comes, should the intimation slip from his memory, he has believed in vain. And from the apostle's declaration, who assures us, that unless we keep the truth in memory we have believed in vain, may we gather what that is which forms the true function and design of the faith that is unto salvation. It is not that by the bare possession of the doctrines which it appropriates as so many materials, salvation may be purchased: it is that by the use to which these materials are

put, we may come into a state of salvation. It is not that truths lying in a state of dormancy within us, form so many titles in our behalf to the purchased inheritance: it is that truths ever present to the waking faculties of our mind, (and they never can be so without being remembered,) have an influence and a power to make us meet for the inheritance.

On this important truth, so indispensable to secure the saving and salutary influence of the other truths of Christianity, when known and believed, we shall make three observations. The first regards the kind of effort that should be made, either by an inquirer or a Christian, in the business of prosecuting his salvation. The second regards the nature of that salvation. And the third regards the power of the truth, when summoned into the mind's presence by an act of recollection, to keep it in that right train both of purpose and desire which prepares and carries it forward to the enjoyment of heaven.

I. With regard to the kind of effort that should be made by an inquirer, he does not, we will venture to say, set earnestly out in quest of salvation without its coming primarily and prominently into his notice, that he is saved by faith. And hence very often a straining of the mind after this acquirement—an anxious endeavour to believe—a repeated attempt to grasp that truth, by the possession of which it is, that we obtain a right to life everlasting; and as the accompaniment of all this, a frequent work of inward search and contemplation, to try if that principle be there, on which there hinges so important a consummation

as the favour of God, and the forgiveness of all trespasses. Now it is worth the remarking, on this subject, that there is no such thing as forcing the belief of the mind beyond what it sees of proof and evidence. We may force the mind to attend to a matter; or we may force it to conceive that matter; or we may force it to persevere in thinking and in dwelling upon it. But beyond the light of evidence you cannot force it to any kind of belief about it. Faith is not to be arrived at in this way; and we can no more command the mind to see that to be truth on which the light of evidence does not shine, than we can command the eye to behold the sun through a dark impalpable cloud, that mantles it from human observation. Should a mountain intervene between our eye and some enchanting scene that lies on the other side of it, it is not by any piercing or penetrative effort on the part of the eye, through this solid opaque mass, that we will obtain the sight after which we are aspiring. And yet there is a way of obtaining it. A mere effort of the eye will not do; but the effort of ascending the mountain will do. And, in like manner, a mere straining of the mind after any doctrine, with a view to apprehend it, will never, without the light of evidence, bring that doctrine into the discernment of the mind's eye. But such is the proclaimed importance of belief, as carrying in it an escape from ruin everlasting, and a translation into all the security of acceptance with God, that to the acquisition of it the effort of an inquirer is most naturally bent: and he is apt to carry this effort beyond the evidence; and the effort to

behold beyond evidence is of a nature so fruitless and fatiguing, that it harasses the mind, just as any overstretch does toward that which, after all, is an impossibility. And yet there is a line of effort that is productive. There is a path along which the light of evidence will dawn, and that which is impossible to be seen without it, will be seen by it; and that, too, without distortion or unnatural violence upon the faculties. We are bidden seek the pearl of great price, and there must be a way of it. It is quite obvious, and not at all impracticable, to read the Bible with attention, and to wait upon ordinances, and to give vent to the desirousness of our hearts in prayer, and to follow conscience in the discharge of all known duties—and the truth which is unto salvation, and by the knowing and believing of which we acquire everlasting life, a truth that never can be seen while an opaque and impenetrable shroud is upon it, will at length break out into open manifestation. It does not do to be so urged by a sense of the necessity of faith, as to try the impracticability of making faith outrun the evidence. But it does well to be at the post, and along the path of inquiry and exertion, where it is promised that the light of this evidence will be made to shine upon us. If we keep by our duties and our Bibles, like the apostles who kept by Jerusalem till the Holy Ghost was poured upon them, there is not one honest seeker who will not, in time, be a sure and triumphant finder. And we ought to commit ourselves in confidence to this course, assured of the prosperous result that must come out of it. We ought not to be discomposed

by our anxieties about the final attainment. Though the alternative of our heaven or hell hang upon the issues of our seeking to be justified by faith, still we ought not to try and toil to make our faith outrun the light of conviction. It should be our great encouragement, that it is not merely he who has found the Lord that is called upon to rejoice, but that it is said by the Psalmist, "Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord." "Ask and ye shall receive: seek and ye shall find: knock and it shall be opened unto you."

Let us now conceive that the truth is gotten—that faith, which has been called, and aptly enough too, the hand of the mind, has appropriated and brought it within the grasp and possession of a believer, the question comes to be, How is this new acquisition to be disposed of? We may be sensible how often truths come to be known and believed by us, and how some of them perhaps have died away from our memory, and never been recalled: and yet we may be said to be in possession of them, for upon their bare mention we will instantly recognise them as doctrines we have already learned, and with the truth of which, at the time that we attended to their evidence, we were abundantly satisfied. Now, is it by such a possession of Christian truth that we will secure a part in the Christian salvation? It is not. It is not by first importing it into our conviction, and then consigning it to some by-corner of the mind, where it lies in a state of oblivion and dormancy—it is not thus, that our knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ becomes life everlasting. The truths

which be unto salvation are not laid past like the forgotten acquisitions of science or scholarship. And we are wrong if we think, that just as the title-deeds of an earthly house in possession may be locked up in security, and never looked to but when the right of property is questioned—so our creed, with all its articles, may be laid up in the depository of our mind, and there lie in deep and undisturbed repose, till our right of entry into the house that is not made with hands, and is eternal in the heavens, comes under examination, among the other topics of the great day of inquiry. We do not think it possible that the essential truths of the gospel can be actually believed, without being afterwards the topic of daily, and unceasing, and practical recurrence. But even though they could, they would, upon such an event, be of no influence towards the salvation of the believer. The apostle tells us expressly, if they are not kept in memory they are believed in vain. By the gospel we are saved, not if we merely believe it, but if we keep it in memory. It is not enough that it have been once acquiesced in: it must ever, and through the whole futurity of our earthly existence, be habitually adverted to. It is not enough that it be sleeping in the mind's hidden repository: it must be in the mind's eye. It must be kept in remembrance; and that too, for the purpose of being called to remembrance. It is not enough that it be in the mind's latent custody: it must be in constant waiting, as it were, for being summoned into the mind's presence—and its efficacy unto salvation, it would

appear, consists not in the mind knowing it, but in the mind thinking of it.

This will be better illustrated by a particular truth. One of those truths to which the apostle alludes, as being indispensable to be kept in memory, in order to be of any efficacy, is, that Christ died for our sins. It is not enough then, it would appear, simply to have believed that Christ died for our sins. This fact must ever and anon be recalled to our memory. It is by no means enough, that we, at one time, were sure of this truth. It is a truth that must be dwelt upon. It is not to be thrown aside as a forgotten thing, which at one time gave entertainment to our thoughts. It must live in our daily recollections. It is not enough that we have taken hold of this dependence. We must keep hold of it: nor does faith even in this save us, unless that which is believed be the topic of ever-recurring contemplation.

For this purpose, the habit of a great, and continuous effort on the part of the human mind is indispensable. We know how all the truths of Christianity, and this one among the number, are apt to slip from the attention; and what a combat with the tendencies of nature it takes to retain our hold of them. It is setting us to a work of great difficulty and great strenuousness, simply to bid us keep in memory the truths of that gospel by which we are saved. They may have entered our mind with the force of all-powerful evidence—and they may have filled it with a sense of their supreme importance—and they may have ministered in the hour of silence and devotion, an influence to relieve, and

to comfort, and to elevate—and yet after all, will we find it a mighty struggle with the infirmities of our constitution, to keep these truths in memory all the day long. We will find, that among the urgencies of this world's business, the one and simple truth, that Christ died for our sins, will take its flight for hours together, and never once be presented to the mind, even in the form of a slight and momentary visitation. To be ever recurring to this truth—to give it an hourly place, along with the multitude of other thoughts that are within us —to turn it into a matter of habitual occupation for that mind, the property of which, throughout all the moments of its waking existence, is to be ever thinking—this is an enterprise in every way as arduous as to work against the current of nature. It is not laying upon us a task that is either easy or insignificant, when we are told to keep the essentials of the gospel in our frequent remembrance. It is the experience of all who have honestly tried it, that it is exceedingly difficult—and yet, so far from a matter of insignificance, it is the averment of the apostle, that if we keep not the gospel in memory, we will not be saved.

We know it to be a work of difficulty, for a man overcome with drowsiness, to keep his eyes open. Suppose that by so doing, he is only made to look on a set of objects which offend and disturb him, we may readily conceive how gladly, in these circumstances, he will make his escape from the hateful imagery which surrounds him, by repairing to the sweet oblivion of nature. But, on the other hand, should his eyes, when open, have a scene of

loveliness before them, by which the soul is regaled, and brightened into sensations that are every way agreeable, then, though an effort be necessary to keep himself awake, yet there is a better chance of the effort being actually made. There will be a reward and an enjoyment to go along with it; and the man, in these new circumstances, would both be in a state of pleasurable feeling, and, at the same time, in a constant struggle to maintain his wakefulness. However delightful the prospect that is before him, this will not supersede the necessity of a strenuous endeavour to keep himself in the posture of observation. And so of the mind's eye, in the mental scenery that is before it. Under all the stir, and activity, and delight of nature's movements, may the soul be profoundly immersed in the slumbers of nature's carnality. It may be spiritually asleep, even when busily engaged with the passing insignificant dreams of our present world. It is indeed a great transition on every son and daughter of our species when he becomes awake to the realities of faith, and is made to perceive the existence and the weight of things invisible. But if all that he is made thus to perceive, be the dark and menacing imagery of terror —if he see nothing but God's holiness on the one hand, and his own sinfulness on the other—if on looking to the sanctuary above, he see nothing but the fire of a devouring jealousy in readiness to go forth over the whole region of disloyalty to heaven's law; and, on looking to himself, he see that he is within the limits of the territory of guilt, and liable to the doom that is in reserve for it, we may per-

ceive the readiness with which many a half-awakened sinner will try to make his escape from the pain and the agitation of such frightful contemplations as these; and how gladly he will cradle his soul back again into its old insensibility, and find a refuge from the whole alarm of faithful sermons, and arousing providences, and constantly recurring deaths in the circle of his much-loved acquaintanceship, in the forgetfulness of a nature, which, by its own drowsiness, may be so easily lulled into a state of unconcern about these things. The man will not, if he can help it, make an effort to keep himself awake, if all he get by it is a spectacle of pain: if he get a spectacle of pleasure by it, he may be prevailed upon. Still, even in this latter case, an effort would be necessary: even after the dread representation of the law is succeeded by the bright and cheering representation of the gospel, it will still be like the offering of a beauteous and inviting spectacle to the eyes of a man who is like to be overcome with drowsiness. There must be a sustained endeavour on his part to keep himself awake. He will ever and anon be relapsing into the slumbers of worldly and alienated nature, if he do not put forth a strenuousness on the object of keeping the truths of the gospel in his memory. So long as he is encompassed with a vile body of sin and of infirmity, which will at length be pulverized by death, and transformed at the resurrection, there will be a struggle with the sleeping propensities that will still be about him towards the things that are unseen and spiritual. Great will be his pleasure, even here, in the objects of his

believing contemplation: but great also must be the effort of painful and unceasing diligence to support the contemplation itself. He will just be like a drowsy spectator, with a fine and fascinating landscape before him, the charm of which he would like to prolong to the uttermost. And however engaging the prospect which the gospel sets before him, however cheering the promises, however effectually the truth that Christ died for our sins, chases away all the fears of the law, when it proclaims, that for every sin that the creature has dared to perpetrate, a holy and an avenging God must be satisfied; still we mistake it, if we think that no effort on the part of the mind is necessary to detain within the reach of its vision this bright and beautiful representation. Though called to rejoice in the Lord alway, yet there must be a putting forth of strength and of vigilance in the work of looking unto Jesus, and of considering Him who is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession.

II. The nature of that salvation which the gospel reveals, has been so fully exhibited by Mr SERLE, in the First Part of this excellent Treatise, as to render any lengthened exposition of it in this place unnecessary. But it is worthy of remark, that, perhaps, there is not a passage in the Bible more fitted to instruct us in what the salvation of Christianity really is, than the expression of the apostle, to which we have so frequently adverted, that unless we keep the truths of the gospel in memory, we have believed in vain. The ordinary conception upon the subject is, that it is a rescue

from hell, with a right of entry and admittance into heaven. And our faith is supposed to be our title-deed; a passport of conveyance, upon the examination of which we are carried in the train of our Saviour and our Judge to paradise; a thing, we fear, apprehended by many to be of no other use than merely to be retained in a sort of secure keeping, that, when found in our possession on the last day, it may then be sustained as our claim to the promised inheritance of glory. Now the apostle tells us, that were it possible to believe the truth without being mindful of the truth, the belief is in vain: in other words, its main use to salvation does not lie in the possession of it then, but in the influence and operation of it now. When placed before the judgment-seat of Christ, it will be known whether we are of the faith; and there is no doubt that this faith will open the door of heaven's kingdom to all who possess it. But, let it well be understood, that this is not the alone, nor even the most important function of faith. It does not lie in useless reserve on this side of time, till the occasion comes round, when on the other side of time, it will vest us with a right of admittance into heaven. Its main operation is our good here, by the thing which has been believed being also the thing that is remembered. Were its only use to confer a title upon us, it might lie in store like an old charter, forgotten for years, but securing its purpose whenever there is a call for its production. But it has another use besides conferring a title: it confers a character. It does something more than cause the place to be made ready for us:

it causes us to be made ready for the place. We believe in vain unless we remember: but it is the habitual advertency of the mind to the great truths of the gospel—it is the unceasing recurrence of its thoughts to them—it is the practice of ever and anon calling them to consideration, and dwelling upon them from one day, and from one hour to another—it is this which appears to stamp upon faith its main efficacy towards salvation. And why? Because salvation lies in deliverance from sin, as well as from punishment—because salvation consists in being introduced to the character of heaven, as well as into heaven itself—because by salvation there is not merely the prospect of another habitation, but there is the working of another principle; and the way in which the memory must be added to faith, else we have believed in vain, is, that the memory, by calling the truths of the gospel into the mind's presence, reiterates upon the mind a moral and a sanctifying influence, which would be altogether unfelt if these truths were forgotten. It is because the memory perpetuates the flame which was first lighted by the faith of Christianity—it is because if faith work by love, then the memory is necessary to the alimenting of this holy affection; and if it be one use of faith to justify the sinner in the sight of God, a no less important use of faith is, that through a habitual remembrance of the truths that are the objects of it, the sinner is brought under the constant operation of a moral influence, by which he is sanctified and made meet for the inheritance.

III. The truths to which the apostle adverts,

when he assures us, that unless we keep them in memory we have believed in vain, are, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that, after He was buried, He rose again. Let the first truth be habitually present to the mind, and the mind will feel itself habitually lightened of the whole terror and bondage of legality. That weight of overhanging despair, which, in fact, represses every attempt at obedience, by making it altogether hopeless, will be taken off from the wearied spirit, and it will break forth with the full play of its emancipated powers on the free and open space of reconciliation. There is nothing that so chains the inactivity of a human being as hopelessness. There is nothing that so paralyzes him, as the undefined, but haunting insecurity and terror, which he cannot shake away. We must be sensible of the new spring that is given to the energies of him who is overwhelmed with debt, when he obtains his discharge. So long as he felt that all was irrecoverable he did nothing: but when he gets his enlargement, he runs with the alacrity of a new-acquired freedom in the path of industry. Now, in the spiritual life, it is this very enlargement which gives rise to this very activity. It is the glad tidings of a release, by Him who hath paid the ransom of our iniquities, that sets our feet in a sure place—that opens up to us a career of new obedience—that levels the barrier which keeps us without hope, and therefore without God in the world—that places us, as it were, in a free and unobstructed avenue, in which, by every step that we advance upon it, we draw

nearer to that Jerusalem above, the gates of which are now thrown open to receive us. The real effect of the doctrine of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, upon the believer, is utterly the reverse of this world's imagination upon the subject. It does not beget the delusion in his mind of an impunity for sinning; but it chases away that heavy soporific from his moral faculties, which the sense of a broken law, when unaccompanied by the faith of an offered gospel, will ever minister to the heart; that let him struggle as he may, and keep as strenuously from sinning as he may, it will be of no use to him. The truth that Christ died for our sins, so far from a soporific, is a stimulus to our obedience; and it is when this truth enters with power into the heart, that the believer can take up the language of the Psalmist and say, "Thou hast enlarged my heart, and I will now run in the way of thy testimonies.

But if such be the influence of this truth when present to the mind, it must, in order to have a habitual influence, be habitually present. In order to work upon the habit and character of the soul, it must ever be offering itself to the notice, and ever reiterating the impulse it is fitted to give to all the feelings, and to all the faculties. We know not a single doctrine, which, by its perpetual recurrence to the thoughts, is more fitted to keep the mind in a right state for obedience. Now, in order that the great work of sanctification go forward, the mind should be constantly in this state. Let this truth be expunged, and for all the purposes of spiritual conformity to the will of God,

the whole man will go into unhingement. But let this truth be lighted up in the soul—let it be kept shining at all times within its receptacles—let the trust never cease to lean upon it, and the memory never cease to recall it, and the hope never cease to dwell upon it—let it only show itself among the crowd of this world's turmoils and anxieties—and whatever the urgencies be, which harass and beset a man on the path of his daily history, let such be the habit of his mind, that, in obedience to this truth, the thought is present with him of his main chance being secured; the animating sense of this will bear him on in triumph through manifold agitations; and when like to sink and give way under the pressure of this world's weariness, and this world's distraction, this will come in aid of his faltering spirit, and carry him in sacredness, and in safety to his final landing-place.

We have not room to expatiate on the influence of the other truth, that Christ rose again—that He eyes every disciple from that summit of observation to which He has been exalted—that the sin for which He died He holds in irreconcilable hatred—and that the purpose of His mediatorship was not merely to atone for its guilt, but utterly to root out its existence and its power from the hearts of all who believe in Him. The Christian who is haunted at all hours of the day by this sentiment, will feel that to sin is to thwart the purpose upon which his Saviour's heart is set, and to crucify Him afresh. This, however, to be kept in power, must be kept in memory. And as with the former truth, if we carry it about with us at

all times, we will walk before God without fear, so with it and the latter truth put together, if both are carried about with us, will we also walk before him in righteousness, and in holiness, all the days of our lives.

But it ought to be remembered, that if we are not mindful of these truths, we positively do not believe them. If we have not the memory, it is a clear evidence that we have not the faith. It is impossible but the mind must be always recurring to matters in which it has a great personal interest, if it only have a sense of their reality. We should try ourselves by this test, and be assured, that if we are not going on unto perfection through the constant and practical influence of the great doctrines of Christianity upon our heart, we need yet to learn what be the first principles of the oracles of God.

It is from these considerations that we estimate so highly the following valuable Treatise of Mr. SERLE, "THE CHRISTIAN REMEMBRANCER," in which the great and essential truths of Christianity are exhibited in a luminous and practical manner. But, it is not merely those more essential truths of the gospel which form the foundation of a sinner's hope, that he brings to our remembrance; the operative nature of these truths, as inwardly experienced by the believer, in the formation of the spiritual life—the sanctifying influence of Christian truth over the affections and character of the believer—the whole preceptive code of social and relative duties to which, as members of society, Christianity requires our obedience—in fine, the whole Christian

system of doctrines and duties is presented in a plain and practical manner, well fitted to assist the understanding in attaining a correct and intimate acquaintance with the truths of Christianity; while the brief, but distinct and impressive form in which they are presented, is no less fitted to assist the memory in its recollection of them. The Treatise, as the Author remarks, is rather intended for hints to carry on the mind to farther meditations, than for full and exact meditations themselves; and it is brought into narrow compass, that the serious Christian may find it a little *Remembrancer*, with many short errands to his heart. And as the reader, from our previous observations, will not fail to remark, that it is not the mere knowledge or possession of any truth, but the constant remembrance of it, which can give it an operative influence over the mind, and make it issue in those practical results which such a truth is fitted to produce—so, however important those precious truths are which are so clearly and impressively presented in the following Treatise, yet they can have no saving or salutary influence, without being kept in constant remembrance.

If it have not been our habit hitherto to call to mind the essential truths of the gospel, we ought to begin now, and by reason of use we will be sure to make progress in it. Whether it be the work of an artisan, or the work of a merchant, there is room for this thought in short and frequent intervals, that Christ died for our sins; and we are confident that, if we are believers, the thought will leave a pacifying and a holy influence behind it. God has

proclaimed a connexion between the presence of gospel truth to the understanding, and the power of gospel affections over the heart. He has told us that faith worketh by love; and we, by constantly recurring to the great objects of faith, are putting that very instrument into operation by which God sanctifies all those who have received his testimony in behalf of Jesus Christ his Son.

If we receive the truths of Christianity, we are not merely put in possession of them as title-deeds to a blessed inheritance above, to be presented after death for our entrance into heaven: they are also instruments to be made use of before death, for graving upon us, as it were, the character of heaven. And when the day of judgment comes, it is not by a direct inspection of the title-deeds that our right to heaven will be ascertained; it is by the inspection of that which has been engraven by the truths of Christianity, operating as so many instruments upon our character. Christ will look to the inscription that has been made upon our hearts and lives: so, while nothing can be more true, than that it is by faith we are justified, it is in fullest harmony with this truth, that it is by works we are judged.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

TO THE

CHRISTIAN'S GREAT INTEREST.

IN TWO PARTS.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM GUTHRIE.

THERE are few subjects or exercises more deeply important to professing Christians, than that which forms the principal topic in the following admirable Treatise—the work of self-examination. But self-examination is a work of great difficulty, and is accordingly shrunk from, or altogether declined by the great body of professing Christians. It is more the habitual style of the mind's contemplations to look at that which is without, than at that which is within—and it is far easier to read the epistles of the written Record, than to read the tablet of one's own heart, and so to ascertain whether it be indeed a living epistle of Christ Jesus our Lord. There is something so shadowy and evanescent in the phases of the human spirit—such a want of the distinct and of the tangible, in its various characteristics—such a turmoil, and confusion, and apparent incoherence in the rapid succession of those thoughts, and impulses, and emotions, which find their way through the avenues of the inner man—that men,

as if lost in the mazes of a labyrinth, deem the world which is within to be the most hopeless and impracticable of all mysteries—nor in the whole range of their varied speculations, do they meet with that which more baffles their endeavours to seize upon, than the busy principle that is lodged within them, and has taken up its residence in the familiar intimacies of their own bosom.

The difficulty of knowing our own heart is much enhanced, if we are in quest of some character or some lineament which is but faintly engraven thereupon. When the thing that we are seeking for is so very dim, or so very minute, as to be almost indiscernible, this makes it a far more fatiguing exercise—and, it may be, an altogether fruitless one. Should then the features of our personal Christianity be yet slightly or obscurely formed, it will need a more intense and laborious scrutiny ere we can possibly recognise them. Should there be a languor in our love to God—should there be a frailty in our purposes of obedience—should there be a trembling indecision of principle, and the weakness or the wavering of a mind that is scarcely made up on the question of a preference for time or for eternity, let us not marvel, though all disguised as these seeds and elements of regeneration within us may be, amid the vigorous struggles of the old man, and the remaining urgencies of a nature which will not receive its death-blow but with the same stroke that brings our bodies to the dust—let us not marvel, if in these circumstances, the hardships of the search should deter many from undertaking it—and though after months, or even years of earnestness

in religion, the disciple may still be in ignorance of himself, as if blindfolded from the view of his own character; or, if arrested at the threshold by a sense of its many difficulties, the work of self-examination has not yet been entered on.

It is thus that the dark and unsearchable nature of the subject operates insensibly but powerfully as a restraint on self-examination—and certainly there would be encouragement felt to begin this exercise, were it made to appear in the light of a more practicable exercise, that could really and successfully be gone through. It is just as if set upon the task of searching for some minute article on the floor of an apartment, of which the windows had been partially closed—a weary and a hopeless undertaking, till the sun has fully risen, and the shutters have been altogether unfolded, and the greatest possible supply of light has been admitted into the room. Then the search might be entered upon with vigour, and just because now it could be entered upon with the alacrity of a comfortable expectation. The work is less repulsive, because easier—and now might the whole surface of this trial for a discovery be patiently explored, just because now a greater visibility had been poured over it.

This leads to a remark, which, though a mere preliminary to the subject of self-examination, we nevertheless deem to be one of great practical importance. We think that however inscrutable at this moment our mind may be, and however faintly the marks and the characteristics of our Christianity are delineated thereupon, yet that even now the inward survey ought to be commenced,

and renewed at frequent intervals, and daily persevered in. But, meanwhile, and to facilitate the search, we should do the very thing that is done in the case of a dark apartment. There should be as much light as possible thrown upon the subject from without. If the lineaments of grace within us be faint, that ought instantly to be done which might have the effect of brightening them into a more lucid distinctness, and so making the work of discovery easier than before. If the love, and the joy, and the grateful devotedness to his Saviour's will, wherewith the heart of a believer is animated, be hardly discernible in his efforts to ascertain them, this is the very reason why all those direct expedients should forthwith be resorted to for stirring up the love, and for exciting the joy, and for fixing in the bosom that grateful devotedness which he is now going so fruitlessly in quest of, and which, if they exist at all, are so shrunken in magnitude, or so enveloped in their own dimness, that they have hitherto eluded all his endeavours to seek after them, if haply he may find them. Now it is not by continuing to pore inwardly that we will shed a greater lustre over the tablet of our own character, any more than we can enlighten the room in which we sit by the straining of our eyes towards the various articles which are therein distributed. In the one case, we take help from the window, and through it from the sun of nature—and this not to supersede the proposed investigation on our part, but altogether to aid and encourage us in that investigation. And in the other case, that the eye of the mind may look with advantage upon

itself inwardly, should it often look outwardly to those luminaries which are suspended from the canopy of that revelation which is from above—we should throw widely open the portal of faith, and this is the way by which light is admitted into the chambers of experience—in defect of a manifest love, and a manifest loyalty, and a manifest sacredness of heart, which we have been seeking for in vain amongst the ambiguities of the inner man, we should expose the whole of this mysterious territory to the influences of the Sun of righteousness, and this is done by gazing upon him with a believer's eye. It is by regarding the love wherewith God in Christ hath loved us, that the before cold and sluggish heart is roused into the respondency of love back again. That the work of reading be made more easy, the character must be made more legible. That Christianity be clearly reflected from our own bosom, all must be laid open to the Christianity of the Record. If we derive no good from the work of self-examination, because we find that all is confusion and mistiness within, then let us go forth upon the truths which are without, and these will pour a flood of light into all the mazes and intricacies of the soul, and, at length, render that work easy, which before was impracticable. No doubt, it is by looking inwardly that we discover what is in the mind—but it is by looking outwardly that we so brighten and bring out its characteristics, as to make these discernible. The gratitude that was before unfelt, because it lay dormant, let us awaken it by the sight of Him who was lifted upon the cross for our

offences, and then will it meet the observation. The filial affection for our Father in heaven, which before was dead, let us quicken it into a felt and gracious sensibility, by looking unto Him in His revealed attitude of graciousness, and at our next exercise of self-inspection, we will be sure to find it. To revive the power of a life that is to come, which the despair of guilt had utterly extinguished in the soul, let us cast our believing regard on the promises of the gospel—and this will set it up again, and then will we more readily ascertain, that our happiness in time is less dear to us than our hopes for eternity. It is thus that by the contemplation of that which is without, we brighten the consciousness of that which is within—and the more manifest the things of revelation are to the eye of faith, the more manifest will the things of experience be to the eye of conscience—and the more distinctly we can view the epistles of Christ in the written Record, the more discernible will its counterpart be in that epistle which is written not with pen and ink, but by the Spirit of God, on the fleshly tablets of our own heart. And so the work of faith, instead of being proposed by us as a substitute, we should propose as the readiest help, and far the best preparative for the work of self-examination.

It were well, if thus we could compose the jealousy of those who deem it legal to go in quest of evidence—but better still, if we could guide the practice of those with whom the business of salvation forms a practical and not a merely theoretical or speculative question.

And *first*, we would say to them, that so far

from setting faith aside by the work of self-examination, we hold that it is the former which supplies the latter with all its materials, and sheds that light over them which makes them visible to the eye of consciousness. Were there no faith, there would be no fruits to inquire after—and it were utterly in vain to go seeking where there was absolutely nothing to find. To a sinner in distress, we unfold the pardon of the gospel; and we bid him look unto Jesus, that he may rejoice. We surely could not say less than this to an inquirer in darkness, even though it be a darkness that has gathered and rests over the tablet of his own character, and hides from his own view all that is good and gracious thereupon. Should the eye fail of its discernment when turned inwardly upon the evidences, we should bid it turn outwardly upon the promises, and this is the way to bring down a clear and satisfying light upon the soul. Just as in some minute and difficult search over the floor of an apartment, we throw open all its windows to the sun of nature, so we ought, by faith, to throw open all the chambers of the inner man to the light of the Sun of Righteousness. They are the truths that be without, which give rise to the traces of a spiritual workmanship within—and the indistinctness of the latter is just the reason why the soul should be ever aiming by attention and belief at a communication with the former.* When self-examination is at a loss to read the characters which are written upon the heart, it is faith alone which can make the inscription more legible—and never will man get acquainted with the home of his own bosom, but

by constant supplies of light and influence from abroad. If we feel, then, an outset of difficulty, in the work of self-examination, let us go anew to the fountain-head of revelation, and there warm, into a sensibility that may be felt, the cold and the faded lineaments of that image which it is the genuine tendency of the truth as it is in Jesus to impress upon the soul. That we may prosper when we examine ourselves, whether we are in the faith, we should have the faith. We should keep it in daily and habitual exercise, and this will strengthen it. If we be familiar with the truths that are without, less will be our difficulty in recognising the traces that are within. The more we gaze upon the radiance, the brighter will we glow with the reflection—and so far from opposition in the exercises of self-examination and of faith, there is the most necessary concert, the most important and beautiful harmony.

But, *secondly*—whatever difficulties there be in self-examination, we should even now make a beginning of the work. We should at least try it—and if we do not succeed, repeat it again and again. We should set ourselves formally down to it, as we would to a prescribed task—and it were well too if we had a prescribed time every day for the doing of it, and let a whole month of honest and sustained perseverance pass over our heads, ere we say of the work that it is impracticable. The more we live a life of faith through the day, the more distinct and legible will be that other page in the record of our personal history, which we shall have to peruse on the evening—and however little we

may have sped at this trial of self-examination, we will either be encouraged or rebuked by it, into a life of greater effort and watchfulness on the morrow. In the business of each day, there will be a reference to the account and settlement that we make at the end of it—and the conclusion of each night will serve either to rectify the errors of our preceding history, or to animate us the more in that path by which we are moving sensibly onward to the heights of moral and spiritual excellence. Thus indeed will we make a business of our sanctification—and, instead of that vague, and shadowy, and altogether chimerical affair which we apprehend to be the religion of many a professor in our day, will it become a matter of solid and practical acquisitions, each of which shall have a visible reality in time, and each of which, by adding to the treasure in heaven, will have its distinct bearing on the interests of eternity.

Now, when we set about any new exercise whatever, we first begin with that which is easy, and afterwards proceed therefrom to that which is more arduous. In the work of self-examination, there is a scale of difficulty—and it were well perhaps that we should make our first entrance upon the work at some of its lower gradations, lest we begin our attempt at too high a place, and be repelled altogether, by finding that it is utterly inaccessible.

To guide us aright, then, in this matter, we might observe, that the overt acts of our visible history, are far more noticeable by the eye of self-examination than those affections of the heart by

which they have been prompted—and, therefore, if not yet able to read the devices of the inner man, let our first attempt be to read the doings of the outer man: "Hereby know we that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." This is a palpable test, in as far, at least, as the hand, or the mouth, or the footsteps, or any of the bodily organs, are concerned—and a series of questions regarding these were a good elementary introduction to the work of self-examination.—Have we, throughout the whole course of this day, uttered the language of profaneness, or contempt, or calumny? Or have we said any of those foolish things which might be ranked among the idle words of which men shall give account on the day of judgment? Or have we expressed ourselves to any of our fellows in the tone of fretfulness and irritation? Or have we on Sabbath refrained our attendance on the public ministrations, and, instead of the readings and the contemplations, and the devout exercises of sacredness, have we given any time to the business and society of the world? Or have we been guilty of disrespect and negligence towards parents, and masters, and superiors of any kind? Or have we done any acts of mischief and revenge to the man whom we hate? Or have we wilfully directed our eye to that which was fitted to kindle the affections, or lead to the purposes of licentiousness? Or have we put forth a hand of violence on the property of our neighbour; and, what is an offence of the same species, have we taken an undue advantage of him in the petty contests and negotiations of the exchange, or of the market-place? Or have we

spoken, if not a direct falsehood, at least a cunningly devised utterance, which, by the tone, and manner, and apparent artlessness of it, was calculated to deceive? Or have we gone to any of the excesses of intemperance, whether of that drunkenness which inflames the faculties, or of that surfeiting which damps and overweighs them. And what this day have been our deeds of beneficence—what our attentions of kindness and charity—what our efforts or our sacrifices in the walk of Christian usefulness—what our almsgivings to the poor—what our labours of piety, either among the habitations of ignorance, or with the members of our own family? These are all matters that stand broadly and discernibly out to the eye of consciousness. They form what may be called the large and legible types on the tablet of self-examination. They form, as it were, the primer, or the alphabet of this most important branch of scholarship. It is as easy for us to frame a catalogue of these questions, and sit regularly down every evening to the task of applying them in succession to our recent history, and meet them with as prompt and clear a reply, as it is for us to tell at the end of each day, what were the visits that we performed, or the people whom we have conversed with, or the walks that we have taken, or the bargains that we have concluded. There is nothing of reconditeness or mystery whatever in this process, at least, of self-examination; and by entering immediately upon it, may we at length be qualified for those more profound exercises by which the intimacies of the heart are probed; and be able to arrive at a finding, and a

familiarity with the now hidden depths of a spiritual experience.

There is much to be gathered even from this more rude and elementary process of self-examination. "By their fruits shall ye know them," says our Saviour; and, after all, much may be learned of the real character of our affections, from the acts in which they terminate. In natural husbandry, one may judge of the vegetation from the crop. It is not indispensable that we dive into the secrets of physiology, or that we be skilled in the anatomy and organization of plants, or that, with the eye of direct observation, we can satisfy ourselves as to the soundness of the root, or the healthful circulation of the juices which ascend from it. There is no doubt, that a good internal economy forms the very essence of vegetable health; and yet how many an agriculturalist, from whom this essence lies hid in deepest mystery, can pronounce upon that which is spread visibly before him, that there has indeed been a grateful and prosperous return for his labours. He knows that there has been a good and abundant growth, though, in the language of a gospel parable, whose design is to illustrate this very thing, he "knoweth not how." And so, to a great extent, of spiritual husbandry. One may be profoundly ignorant of moral science. He may not be able to grope his way among the arcana of the inner man. There might not be a more inscrutable thing to him in nature, than the mystery of his own spirit; and not a darker or more impenetrable chaos, than that heart which ever teemeth with the abundance of its own thoughts

and its own counsels. Yet from the abundance of that heart the mouth speaketh; and words are audible things—and out of that heart are the issues of life; and the deeds of our life or history are visible things—and as the heart prompteth so the hand performeth—and thus a legible expression is sent forth, even from the depths of an else unsearchable cavern, which we at least have never entered, either to sound its recesses, or to read the characters that are graven within its secret chambers of imagery. If we cannot go profoundly to work, let us go to it plainly. If the fountain be hid, let us take cognizance of the stream that issueth from the outlets. If we cannot guage the designs, let us at least institute a questionary process upon the doings; and if we have wearied ourselves in vain at searching for the marks of grace upon the soul, let us remember that the body is its instrument and its vehicle, and we may at least examine ourselves as to all its movements of accordancy with the ten commandments.

Let us therefore be in earnest in this work of self-examination, which is reputed to be of so much difficulty, and immediately do that which we can; and thus will we at length be qualified for doing that which we at present cannot. Let it be the task of every evening to review the palpable history of every day; and if we cannot dive into the heart, we may at least take cognizance of the handywork. We may not yet be able to analyze the feelings which enter into the hidden life of obedience; but we can take account of the literalities of obedience. The hasty utterance by which we

wounded another's sensibilities—the pleasantries by which we enlivened a festive circle, at the expense of some absent character—the tone of offence or imperiousness into which some domestic annoyance hath provoked us—the excess into which we have been betrayed amid the glee of merry companionship—the neglect of prayer and of the Bible, into which we have once more been led by distaste, or indolence, or the urgency of this world's business—these, and many more, are surely noticeable things, which can be recalled by the memory, and rebuked by the moral sense, of the most ordinary Christian; and which, if so dealt with at the close of any day, might give to the morrow's walk a greater care and a greater conscientiousness.

What we ought to do is to begin now the work of self-examination—we should now make a practical outset, and do forthwith all that our attainment and ability will let us—we should not despise the day of small things, nor idly postpone the work of self-examination till a sense, and a spirit, and a subtlety, which we at present have not, shall come upon us, as if by inspiration. If the inward motions be too faint and fugitive for us to apprehend, let us lay hold at least of the outward movements, and by a faithful retrospect and reformation of these, will our senses at length be exercised to discern both the good and the evil. What we ought to chase away from the habit of the soul is a certain quietism of inert and inactive speculation, when lulled by the jingle of an unmeaning orthodoxy, it goeth not forth with its loins girded, as well as its lamp burning, and only dreams of a coming glory,

and immortality, and honour, instead of seeking for them by a patient continuance in well-doing. We ought earnestly to make a business of our Christianity, and be diligent in doing that which our hand findeth to do; and if at present the mysteries of a deeper experience look so remote and inaccessible that we cannot apprehend them, let us at least question ourselves most strictly as to the doings of our ordinary path; and under the guidance of that Spirit whose office it is to reveal all truth, will we, at length, be disciplined for greater things than these.

In prosecuting the business of self-inspection, it is of importance that we be guided aright in our inquiries into our spiritual state; and we know of few works better fitted to assist the honest inquirer in his search, than MR GUTHRIE'S "CHRISTIAN'S GREAT INTEREST." It is divided into Two Parts, "The Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ," and "How to attain to a Saving Interest in Christ;" and we think it impossible to peruse this valuable Treatise, with the candour and sincerity of an honest mind, without arriving at a solid conclusion as to our spiritual condition. His experimental acquaintance with the operations and genuine fruits of the Spirit, and his intimate knowledge of the workings of the human heart, fitted him for applying the tests of infallible truth to aid us in ascertaining what spirit we are of—for exposing and dissipating the false hopes of the hypocrite—for leading the careless Christian to investigate the causes of his declension in godliness, and to examine anew whether he be in the faith—and for detecting and

laying open the fallacies and delusions which men practise on themselves, in regard to the state of their souls. He faithfully exposes the insidious nature of that deceitfulness of the human heart, which lulls men into a false security, while their Christianity is nothing more than a heartless and hollow profession, and they are standing exposed to the fearful condemnation denounced against those who have "a name to live, but are dead."

Nor is his clear and scriptural exhibition of the dispensation of grace less fitted to guide the humble inquirer into the way of salvation. As a faithful ambassador of Christ, he is free and unreserved in his offers of pardon and reconciliation, through the death and obedience of Christ, to the acceptance of sinners; but he is no less faithful in stating and asserting the claims of the gospel, to an unshrinking and universal obedience, and to an undisputed supremacy over the heart and affections. And to aid the sincere Christian in the cultivation of the spiritual life, he urgently enjoins an implicit acquiescence in the guidance and intimations of the Holy Spirit, through whose operation it is that a cordial and affectionate faith in the whole of God's testimony can be wrought in the soul; by whose spiritual illumination it is that the truth becomes the instrument of sanctifying and saving us; while by the inward experience of the Spirit's light, and comfort, and renewing power, combined with the outward and visible growth of the fruits of righteousness, in the character, we acquire the best and surest evidence that we have obtained a saving interest in Christ.

The intimate acquaintance which he manifests with the spiritual life, and his clear, affectionate, and earnest expositions of the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, render this Treatise a precious companion to the sincere Christian; while his powerful and urgent appeals to the conscience are peculiarly fitted to awaken men to a concern about those matters to which the Scriptures attach such an infinite importance; to lead them in earnest to avoid the possibility of continuing in deception; and to constrain them to seek after a full assurance on that subject on which, above all others, it becomes men to be well assured.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

TO THE

GRACE AND DUTY OF BEING SPIRITUALLY MINDED,

DECLARED, AND PRACTICALLY IMPROVED.

By JOHN OWEN, D.D.

We formerly observed, in our Essay to "Guthrie's Christian's Great Interest," that such is the great difficulty of self-examination, that it were well, if, instead of attempting at first the more arduous, the Christian disciple should begin with the more elementary of its exercises. And for this purpose, at his entrance upon this most useful work, he might commence with a daily review, if not of the affections of his heart, at least of the actions of his visible history. These are far more palpable than the others, and have somewhat of that superior facility for the observation of them, which the properties of matter, have over those of the hidden and unseen spirit. The great thing wanted is, that he should be encouraged to make the attempt in any way—and therefore do we repeat our admonition, that on each evening, ere sleep has closed his eyes, he should summon to his remembrance those deeds of the day that have passed over him, which else might have vanished from the mind for ever, or at least till that eventful occasion when the book

their imperishable record shall be opened. And it is good also that he should sit in judgment as well as in memory over them. Let him thus judge himself, and he shall not be judged. The daily remembrance of the one great Sacrifice will wash away the guilt of those daily aberrations that are faithfully recalled and truly repented of; and if there be a reality in that sanctifying influence which faith is said to bring along with it, then will the very act by which he confesses the remembered sins of the day, both bring peace to his conscience, and purity to his conduct.

And this mere cognizance, not of the heart, but of the handy-work, brings us to the faith and spirituality of the gospel by a shorter path than may be apprehended. It is true, that the mind is the proper seat of religion; and however right our actions may be in the matter of them, they are of no account in Christianity, unless they have proceeded from a central and spontaneous impulse which originates there. They may be moulded into a visible propriety by an influence from without, or have arisen from secondary motives, which are of no account whatever in the estimation of the upper sanctuary; and hence it is a possible thing that we may delude ourselves into a treacherous complacency, because of the many deeds of integrity, and courteousness, and beneficence in which we abound. Still, however, it will speedily be found, that in the midst of all our amiable and constitutional virtues, there are the outbreakings of evil upon our conduct, and such as nothing but a spiritual principle can effectually restrain. In taking

cognizance of these, then, which we do in the first stage of self-examination, we are brought to feel the need of something higher than any of those powers or properties wherewith nature has endowed us—we are taught the nakedness of our moral condition—we are convinced of sin, and thrown upon those resources out of which pardon is administered, and help is made to descend upon us. We are not therefore to underrate the examination of our doings, or think that when thus employed, we are only wasting our thoughts on the bare and barren literalities of that bodily exercise which profiteth little. Even on this lower walk we shall meet with many deficiencies and many deviations; and be often rebuked into a sense of our own worthlessness; and shall have to lament, in the many offences of the outer man, how dependent we are both on a sanctifying grace and an atoning sacrifice. Or, in other words, by a regular habit of self-examination, even in the rudest and most elementary branch of it, may we be schooled into the doctrines of sin and of the Saviour, and from what is most observable in the outer path, may gather such intimations of what we are, and of what we need, as will conduct us to the very essence of vital Christianity.

Now, after this, there is what we would call the second stage in the work of self-examination. Our reason for advising a Christian to begin first with a survey of the handy-work, ere he proceeds to a search and scrutiny of the heart, is, that the one is greatly more manifest than the other. Now it is said in Scripture, "that the works of the flesh are manifest;" and what we would have him to remark

is, that, in the enumeration of these works, the apostle takes account of wrong affections as well as of wrong actions. Wrath, for example, and hatred, and envy—these, in the estimation of the apostles, are alike manifest with drunkenness, and open quarrelling, and murder. It would appear that there are certain strong and urgent feelings of the inner man, which may be as distinctly taken cognizance of, as certain glaring and palpable misdeeds of the outward history. And therefore, while, for the first stage of self-examination, we proposed, as the topics of it, the doings of the visible conduct, we would suggest, for the second stage, the evil desires of the heart, which, whether they break forth or not into open effervescence, at least announce, and that most vividly, their existence and their power, to the eye, or rather to the sense of conscience, simply by the felt emotion which they stir up within, by the fierceness wherewith they rage and tumultuate among the secrecies of the bosom.

It is certainly worth adverting to, that while it is said of the works of the flesh, that they are manifest, the same is not said of the fruits of the Spirit. And this, we are persuaded, will meet the experience even of the most spiritual and advanced Christian. Is there any such, who can say of his love to God, that it is a far more intense and sensible affection within him, than the anger which he often feels at the provocations of insult or dishonesty? Or will he say, that his joy in spiritual things has in it the power of a more noticeable sensation, than his joy in the fame or good fortune of

this world? Or is the gentleness of his renewed heart a thing that can so readily meet the eye of observation, as the occasional violence, or even as those slighter touches of resentful and uncharitable feeling wherewith he at times is visited? Has he not often to complain, that in searching for the evidences of a work of grace, they are scarcely, if at all, discernible; whereas, nothing is more manifest than the constant risings of a sinful affection, and that weight of a carnal and corrupt nature, wherewith the inner man is well nigh overborne? Is it not distinctly his experience, that while the works of his flesh are most abundantly manifest, the fruits of the Spirit are of such slender or questionable growth, as well nigh to escape his observation? And does not this furnish a ground for the distinction, that whereas the former might well constitute the topics for the second stage of self-examination, the latter has their more befitting place as a higher and more advanced stage of it.

And here will we make another appeal to the experience of a Christian. Does he not feel of his evil affections, that not only are they more manifest to his own conscience, than his gracious and good ones; but is it not further true, that they are more manifest even now than they were formerly—that he has a more distinct feeling both of their existence and their malignity at this moment, than he had years ago—that he is greatly more burdened with a sense of their besetting urgency, and is hence apt to infer, that of themselves, they are surely more aggravated in their character—and that he is getting worse, perhaps, instead of

advancing, as he heartily and honestly wishes to do, in the course of his sanctification? The inference is not a sound one; for both to the eye of the world, and to the eye of witnesses in heaven, he is growing both in humility and in holiness. But if his growth in humility should outstrip his growth in holiness, then to his own eye may there be a fuller and more affecting manifestation of his worthlessness than before. While the sin of his nature is upon the decay, there may, at the very time, be a progress in his sensibility to the evil of it. Just in proportion to the force of his resistance against the carnality of the old man, does he come more pressingly into contact with all its affections and its tendencies; and so, these being more deeply felt, are also more distinctly recognised by him. It was thus with Paul, when he found the law in his members, that warred against the law of his mind; and when he complained of his vile body; and when he affirmed of the struggle between the opposite principles of his now compound nature, that it not only harassed, but hindered him from doing the things which he would. He did not grow in corruption, but he grew in a more touching impression, and a clearer insight of it; and so of the Christian still, that more in heaviness though he be, under the felt and conscious movements of an accursed nature, which is not yet extinct, though under a sure and effectual process of decay, it is not because he is declining in religious growth, but because he is advancing in religious tenderness; striking his roots more profoundly into the depths of self-abasement, and therefore upwardly shooting

more aloft than ever, among the heights of angelic sacredness.

We say this, partly for comfort, and to remind the Christian that it is good for him, in every stage of his career, to keep himself weaned from his own righteousness, and wedded to the righteousness of Christ. But he will also perceive how it is, that just as he grows in positive excellence, so does he become more feelingly alive, and more intelligently wakeful to the soil and the sinfulness wherewith it is still tarnished; and thus will every new accession to his Christianity facilitate the work which we have prescribed for him, on the second stage of self-examination.

It is thus, then, that we would introduce him to the business of making search and entry into the recesses of the inner man. Let him begin with the evil affections of his nature, for these are at first far more discernible than the others; and even though under the power of grace they are withering into decay, still from the growth of his moral and spiritual delicacy, may they remain more discernible to the very end of his history in the world. They are therefore more easily recognised, than are the features of the new character, and should, of consequence, have an earlier place in the course of self-examination, that important branch of Christian scholarship. As the habit of reviewing the handy-work, prepared him for entering on the review of the heart, so the habit of reading those more palpable lineaments which are graven thereupon, may prepare him for scrutinizing that more hidden workmanship, which, under the processes

of the economy of grace, is carried forward in the soul of every believer. And agreeably to this, we would have him to take account, on each successive evening, of every uncharitable feeling that hath arisen through the day, of every angry emotion wherewith he has been visited, of every impure thought that he either loved to cherish, or did not rebuke with a prompt and sensitive alarm away from him, of every brooding anxiety that seemed to mark how much the crosses of time preponderate with him over the cares and concerns of eternity —withal, of that constant and cleaving ungodliness which compasses us about with all the tenacity and fulness of a natural element, and makes it so plain to the enlightened conscience, that though the heart were exempted from all the agitations of malice or licentiousness, yet still that Atheism, practical Atheism, is its kindly and congenial atmosphere. In taking such a nightly retrospect as this, how often may he be reminded of his preference for self in the negotiations of merchandise —of the little temptations to deceit, to which he had given a somewhat agreeable entertainment— of the dominant love of this world's treasure, and how it tends to overbear his appetite for the meat that endureth, his earnestness for being rich towards God!—These, and many like propensities as these, will obtrude themselves as the mementoes of nature's remaining frailty; they will be to him the indications of a work that is still to be done, the materials for his repentance every night, the motives and the impulses for his renewed vigilance on the morrow.

We now enter on the third and last stage of self-examination, at which it is that we take cognizance of a past work of grace that is going on in the soul; and read the lineaments of our new nature; and from the fruits of the Spirit having now become distinct and discernible within us, can assuredly infer, that now we are possessed of the earnest of our inheritance, and have the witness within ourselves, that we are indeed the children of God. And we think, that the humbler exercises which we have now insisted on, may prepare the way for this more subtle and recondite part of the work of self-examination. Certain it is, that it might subserve the object of bringing the Spirit of God into closer and more effectual fellowship with the soul. Only, let the notice which one takes of his evil affections, be the signal to him for entering, and that immediately, into a war of resistance, if not of extermination, against them. Having learned the strength and number of his enemies, let him forthwith be more determined in his guardianship; and, in proportion as he succeeds, in that very proportion does he invite the approach of the Spirit of all grace, and will have the benefit of his power and workmanship upon the soul. "Grieve not the Spirit," says the apostle, and quench not his influences. Just as the disciple mortifies the pride, or the peevishness, or any of those evil propensities which are the works of the flesh, does he take away those topics of offence and discouragement which keep the Holy Ghost at a distance—does he remove the obstacles that lie in the way of his operation—does he begin, in fact, that good work

which the Spirit will carry on—does he cease to do evil, and learn from the Spirit, and is enabled by the Spirit, to do well. Thus it is, that he is made to advance from one degree of grace to another; and, instead of mystically waiting for an illumination and a power which he has no reason to believe will ever come upon him, idly looking forward to it in the shape of a sudden and auspicious visitation, let him enter, even now, on that course of new obedience, along which a disciple is conducted from the first elements of his spiritual education, to those brightest accomplishments which a saint on earth has ever realized.

There is one very immediate result that comes out even of this earlier part in the work of self-examination. If one be led, from the discovery of what is evil, to combat it, then is he led to be diligent, that he may be found without spot, and blameless in the great day of reckoning. He is working out his salvation from sin. He embarks on the toils of the Christian warfare. He fights the good fight, and forthwith makes a busy work a strenuous conflict of his sanctification. And he should not linger another day, ere he commence in good earnest this purification for eternity. He should remember that the terms which the Bible employs, are all expressive of rapidity:—To *flee* from the coming wrath; and flee from those evil affections which war against the soul; and *make haste* to keep the commandments; and tarry not in turning to Christ, and turning from all his iniquities.

There is nothing of which the earnest and aspir-

ing disciple is more ready to complain, than that, while all alive to the sense of his corruptions, he is scarcely sensible of the work of grace that should be going on. The motions of the flesh are most distinct and most discernible, while, on the question of the Spirit's operation upon his heart, he is in a state of utter blindness and bewilderment. He feels weighed down by the remaining carnality of his nature, while he feels not within him any growing positive conformity to the character of one of heaven's children. There is a more galling sensation than before of all about him that is evil, but often without any thing to alleviate the oppressive thought, by the consciousness of much that is truly and unequivocally good. And thus a discomfort in the mind of many an incipient Christian —an apprehension that he has not yet tasted of the Spirit of God, nor has any part in that which is called the seal of his redemption, the earnest of his inheritance.

Now it may comfort him to know, that this very dejection of his heart may, of itself, be a fruit and an evidence of the Holy Ghost having been at work with him. This painful sensibility to what is wrong, may evince him to be now at the place of breaking forth, now at the very turning point of his regeneration. The very heaviness under which he labours, is perhaps as decisive a symptom as can be given, that he is now bending his upward way along the career of an arduous, but still advancing sanctification. When the Psalmist complained of himself that his heart clave unto the dust, and therefore prayed that God would

quicken him, he perhaps did not know that the quickening process had begun with him already, and that even now he was actuated by the spirit of grace and of supplication—that ere the lineaments of an affirmative excellence could come visibly forth upon his character, it was for him to supplicate the new heart and the right spirit, because for all these things God must be inquired after, and that he now had come the length of this inquiry—that so far from this despondency being a proof of the destitution of the Spirit, one of the first-fruits of the Spirit, in the apostle and his converts, was that they groaned inwardly, being burdened, being now touched as they never were before with a feeling of their infirmities. To the now renovated eye, the soil that is upon the character is more painfully offensive than before; and to the now softened heart, there is the grief of a moral tenderness because of sin, that was before unfelt, but now is nearly overwhelming. The dead know not that they are dead, and not till the first moments of their returning life, can they be appalled by the feeling of the death-like paralysis that is upon them. And let us not then refuse that, even under the burden of a heavy-laden consciousness, the reviving Spirit may be there—that, like as with the chaos of matter, when he moved upon the face of the waters he troubled and bedimmed them, so his first footsteps on the face of the moral chaos may thicken that turbulence which he is at length to harmonize—that the sense of darkness which now oppresses the soul, is in fact the first gleaming of that light by which the darkness is made visible

—and the horror by which it is seized upon, when made to feel itself in a sepulchre of corruption, is its first awakening from the death of trespasses and sins, the incipient step of its spiritual resurrection.

But, while we allege this as a word in season to the weary, yet should we like a higher class of evidences, than this for the workmanship of God upon our souls—we desire a substantive proof of our regeneration, a legible impress of some one feature that only belongs to the new man in Christ Jesus, and might be an encouraging token to ourselves, that on the groundwork of our old nature the true spiritual portrait is begun, and is now actually in progress towards that last finish, by which it is prepared for a place among the courts or palaces of the upper sanctuary. It is at this point in the series of our self-examinations, that we are met with its most formidable difficulties. It is easy to take account of the visible doings. It is easy to take account also of the evil or corrupt affections. But to find a positive encouragement in the sense that we have of the now gracious affections of a renovated heart—to descry in embryo the rudiments of a moral excellence that is yet unformed—to catch the lineaments of that heavenly image, which is but faintly noticeable under that aspect of vigour and entireness which still belongs to the old and the ordinary man—this is found by many an anxious inquirer to be indeed a baffling enterprise; and though he believe in Christ, he has been known to wander in darkness, and even in distress, because short in all his weary endeavours after the full assurance of hope unto the end.

Now, ere we suggest any thing for the guidance of his inquiries, let us remind him of the difference which there is between the assurance of hope and the assurance of faith. The one is a certainty, founded on the observation that he has taken of himself—and because he perceives, from the real work of grace which has been performed on him, that he is indeed one of the children of God. The other is a certainty, founded on the cognizance that he has taken of God's promises—and because he perceives, both from their perfect honesty, and from the ample unrestricted scope of their address to all and to every of our species, that he may venture a full reliance for himself on the propitiation that has been made for the world, on the righteousness that is unto all and upon all who believe. Now the assurance of hope is far, and may be very far posterior to the assurance of faith. One cannot too soon or too firmly put his confidence in the word of God. The truth of his sayings is a matter altogether distinct from the truth of our own sanctification. Even now, upon the warrant of God's testimony, may the sinner come into acceptance, and take up his resting-place under the canopy of Christ's mediatorship, and rejoice in this, that the blood which he has shed cleanseth from all sin: and, with a full appropriation of this universal specific to his own guilt, may he stand with a free and disburdened conscience before the God whom he has offended. He may do all this even now, and still it is but the assurance of faith, the confidence of one who is looking outwardly on the truth and the meaning of God's declarations. The

assurance of hope is the confidence that one feels in looking inwardly to the graces of his own character, and should only grow with his spiritual growth, and strengthen with his spiritual strength. But we may be certain of this, that the best way by which we attain to the latter assurance, is to cherish the former assurance even to the uttermost. Let us send forth our believing regards on the Sun of Righteousness, and thus shall we admit into our bosom both a heat that will kindle its gracious affections, and a light that will make them manifest. In other words, let us be ever employed in the work of faith, and this will not only shed a brightness over the tablet of the inner man, but it is the direct method by which to crowd and to enrich it with the best materials for the work of self-examination.

Let us now, then, specify a few of these materials, some of the fruits of that Spirit which is given to those who believe, and on the production and growth of which within them, they may attain the comfortable assurance in themselves, that they are indeed the workmanship and the husbandry of God. Some, perhaps, may be led to recognise their own likeness in one or other of the features that we delineate, and so to rejoice. Others may be left in uncertainty, or even be made certain that, as yet, they have no part nor lot in the matter of personal Christianity. But whatever their conclusions may be, we would commit all of them alike back again to the exercise of that faith, out of which alone it is that the spiritual life can be made to germinate, or that it can at all be upheld.

The experience of one man varies exceedingly

from that of another; but we would say, in the first place, that one very general mark of the Spirit's work upon the soul, is the new taste and the new intelligence wherewith a man now looks upon the Bible. Let that which before was dark and mystical now appear light unto him—let a power and a preciousness be felt in its clauses, which he wont altogether to miss in his old mechanical style of perusing it—let there be a sense and a weight of significancy in those passages which at one time escaped his discernment—let there now be a conscious adaptation between its truths and the desires or the necessities of his own heart—and, above all, let there be a willing consent and coalescence with such doctrines as before revolted him into antipathy, or at least were regarded with listless unconcern—in particular, let there be a responding testimony from within to all which that book affirms of the sin of our nature—and, instead of the Saviour being lightly esteemed, let his name and his righteousness have all the power of a restorative upon the soul. Should these things meet in the experience of any one, then it needs not that there should either be a voice or a vision to convince us, that upon him the Holy Spirit of God has had its sure, though its silent operation—that he has been plying him with his own instrument, which is the word of God—that it is he, and not nature, who has evolved from the pages of Scripture this new light on the mind of the inquirer—that, apart altogether from the visitation of a trance, or a glory, or the inspiration of a whisper at midnight, there has been a wisdom from above, which, through the medium of

the written testimony, has addressed itself to the man's understanding; and the perception which he now has of the things of faith, is not the fruit of his own spontaneous and unaided faculties—that the things which he has gotten from Scripture, he in fact has gotten from the Spirit, who holds no other communication with the human mind than through the avenues of God's unalterable record,—they may be the very things which the natural man cannot receive, and neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

But, while we hope that this may fall on some with an impression of comfort, it is right that it should be accompanied with a caution. Though true that there may be a desire for the sincere milk of the word, which evinces one to be a new-born babe; yet it is also true, that one may have tasted of the good word of God, and finally apostatize. And lest any who have been so far enlightened by the Holy Ghost should be of this hopeless and ill-fated class, let us warn them to take heed lest they fall—lest they fall more particularly from the evidence on which we have now been expatiating—lest they lose their relish, and so give up their reading of the Bible—lest the first love wherewith they at one time regarded it should again be dissipated, and that spiritual appetite which they felt for the essential simplicities of the gospel, should at length decline into a liking for heartless controversy or for barren speculation. Let such strive, by prayer and by a constant habit of perusal, to retain, yea, to augment their interest in the Bible. Let them be assured, that a kindredness in their heart

with its flavour and its phraseology, is a kindredness with heaven—nor do we know a better evidence of preparation for the sanctuary, than when the very truths and very words of the sanctuary are precious.

But again, another fruit of the Spirit, another sign, as it were, of his workmanship upon the soul, is that we love the brethren, or, in other words, that we feel a savour which perhaps we had not formerly in the converse, and society, and whole tone and habit of spiritual men. The advantage of this test is, that it is so very palpable—that with all the obscurity which rests on the other evidences, this may remain a most distinct and discernible one, and be often the solitary vestige, as it were, of our translation into a new moral existence, when some dark cloud hath overshadowed all the other lineaments of that epistle which the Spirit hath graven upon our hearts. "Hereby know we," says the apostle, "that we have passed from death unto life, even that we love the brethren." One may remember when he had no such love—when he nauseated the very air and aspect of sacredness—when the world was his kindred atmosphere, and worldly men the only companionship in which he could breathe with native comfort or satisfaction—when the very look and language of the peculiar people were an offence to him, and he gladly escaped from a clime so ungenial with his spirits, to the glee of earthly fellowship, to the bustle of earthly employments. Was it so with him at one time, and is it different now? Has he a taste for association with the pious? Does he relish the unction that is upon their feelings, and has he now a tact of congeniality

with that certain breath and spirit of holiness, the sensation of which, at one time, disgusted him? Then verily we have good hopes of a good, and, we trust a decisive transformation—that this taste for converse with the saints on earth, is a foretaste to his full enjoyment of their converse in heaven—that there is a gradual attemperment going on of his character here to the condition which awaits him there—that he has really been translated from the kingdom of this world to the kingdom of light—and if it be true, that to consummate our preparation for hell, we must not only do those things which are worthy of death, but have pleasure in those that do them, we cannot understand why a growing affection on his part for the servants of God should not be sustained, as the comfortable token that he is indeed under a process of ripening for the delights and the services of the upper sanctuary.

But there is room here too for a caution. There may be a sentimental homage rendered even by a mere child of nature to Christianity. There may be a taste for certain aspects of sacredness, without any kindred delight in sacredness itself. There may be a predilection of the fancy for some of the Spirit's graces, which yet may augur no more one's own vital participation in that Spirit, than would his relish for the simplicity of Quaker attire, or his admiration of that Moravian village, where his eye rested on so many peaceful tenements, and his ear was ravished at intervals with the voice of melting psalmody. And more recently, there is the excitement of all that modern philanthropy which requires combination, and eloquence, and adventure, and

busy management; and thus an enjoyment in religious societies, without enjoyment in religion. There may go on animating bustle in the outer courts, to interest and engage the man who had no sympathy whatever with those chosen few that now were admitted among the glories of the inner temple. And, therefore, let us try if, apart from the impulse of all these externals, we indeed breathe in a kindred atmosphere, when we sit down in close and intimate fellowship with a man of prayer—if we can listen with eager and heart-felt satisfaction to the experience of an humble Christian—if, when sitting by the bed of the dying believer, we can sympathize with the hope that beams in his eye, and the peace that flows through his heart like a mighty river—or if, when the Bible is upon his lips, and he tries to quote those simple sayings by which the departing spirit is sustained, we can read and rejoice along with him.

But, without attempting any thing like a full enumeration of the Spirit's fruits, we shall advert to the one that perhaps of all others is most indispensable—a growing tenderness because of sin—a quicker moral alarm at its most distant approaches, at its slightest violations of purity or rectitude—a susceptibility of conscience, which exposes one to distress from what was before unheeded, and left no infliction of remorse behind it—an utter loathing at that which was, perhaps, at one time liked or laughed at, even the song, and the oath, and the gross indelicacy of profane or licentious companionship—a sensitive and high-minded recoil from the lying artifices of trade—and withal, the pain of a

violated principle at those Sabbath desecrations in which we wont to rejoice. This growing hostility to sin, and growing taste of its bitterness, are truly satisfying evidences of the Spirit's operation; and more particularly, when they stand associated with a just estimation of the gospel. Did the candidate for heaven still think that heaven was won by obedience, then we might conceive him urged on to the warfare of all his energies against the power of moral evil, by the terrors of the law. But, thinking as he does, that heaven is a gift, and not a recompense, it delivers, from all taint of mercenary legalism, both his love of what is good, and his hatred of what is evil. It stamps a far purer and more generous character on his resistance to sin. It likens his abhorrence of it more to the kindred feature in the character of God, who cannot do that which is wrong, not because he feareth punishment, but because he hateth iniquity. To hate the thing for which vengeance would pursue us, is not so disinterested as to hate the thing of which forgiveness hath been offered; and so, if two men were exhibited to notice, one of them under the economy of works, and the other under the economy of grace, and both equally assiduous in the conflict with sin, we should say of the latter, that he gave far more satisfying proof than the former, of a pure and god-like antipathy to evil; and that he, of the two, was more clearly the subject of that regenerating process under which man is renewed after the image of his Creator, in righteousness and in true holiness.

We might have given a larger exemplification

of the Spirit's fruits, and of those topics of self-examination, by which the Christian might rightly estimate the true state of his spiritual character; but, instead of multiplying our illustrations, would we refer our readers to the following profound and searching Treatise of Dr Owen, "On the Grace and Duty of being Spiritually Minded." Dr Owen's is indeed a venerated name, which stands in the first rank of those noble worthies who adorned a former period of our country and of our church. He was a star of the first magnitude in that bright constellation of luminaries, who shed a light and a glory over the age in which they lived; and whose genius, and whose writings, continue to shed their radiance over succeeding generations. The following Treatise of Dr Owen holds a distinguished rank among the voluminous writings of this celebrated author; and it is characterized by a forcible application of truth to the conscience—by a depth of experimental feeling—an accuracy of spiritual discernment into the intimacies and operations of the human mind—and a skill in exploring the secrecies of the heart, and the varieties of affection, and the ever-shifting phases of character,—which render this admirable Treatise not less a test, than a valuable guide to the honest inquirer, in his scrutiny into the real state of his heart and affections. Amidst the difficulties and perplexities which beset the path of the sincere inquirer, in the work of self-examination, he will be greatly aided in this important search by the attentive and serious perusal of this Treatise. In it he will find, in minute delineation, the varied

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tastes and emotions, of affection and of feeling, which belong to either class of the carnal or spiritually minded; and in the faithful mirror which it holds up to the view, he cannot fail to discern, most vividly reflected, the true portraiture of his own character.

But it is not merely as a test of character, that the value of this precious Treatise is to be estimated. By his powerful expositions of the deceitfulness of the human heart, he endeavours to disturb that delusive repose into which men are betrayed in regard to futurity, under the guise of a regular outward observance of the duties of religion, and a fair external conformity to the decencies of life, while the principle of ungodliness pervades the whole heart and affections. And here his faithful monitions may be profitable to those who, insensible to the spirituality and extent of the divine law, are also insensible of their fearful deficiency from its lofty requirements—who have never been visited with a conviction that the principle of love to God, which has its seat in the affections of the heart, is an essential and indispensable requisite to all acceptable obedience—and that, destitute of a relish and delight in spiritual things, and with a heart that nauseates the sacredness of holy and retired communings with God, whatever be their external decencies, or outward conformities to the divine law, they still are exposed to the charge and the doom of being carnally minded.

But this Treatise contains a no less important delineation of the state of heart, in those who have become the humble and earnest aspirants after

heaven, and are honestly cultivating those affections of the renewed heart, and those graces of the Christian character, which form the indispensable preparation for the delights and the employments of the upper sanctuary. He marks with graphic accuracy the tastes and the tendencies of the new creature; and most instructive to the Christian disciple is it to learn, from one so experimentally acquainted with the hidden operations of the inner man, what are the characteristic graces of the Spirit, and resemblances of the divine nature, that are engraven on his soul, by which, amidst all the shortcomings and infirmities of his nature, not yet fully delivered from the bondage of corruption, he may, nevertheless, have the comfort and the evidence that he is spiritually minded.

And one principal excellence of this useful Treatise is, to guard the believer against the insidiousness and power of those spiritual enemies with which he has to contend—with the deceitfulness of the heart, the natural and unresisted current of whose imaginations is only vanity and evil continually—with the insnaring and besetting urgencies of worldly things, into whose presence his duties and avocations will unavoidably introduce him—with the ever busy temptations of the adversary of souls, to retain or to recover the spirit which is striving to enter in at the strait gate. And, sheathed in the Christian panoply, he reminds him of the struggle he must hold, of the watchfulness he must exercise, and of the constant and persevering warfare he must maintain with them in his earthly journey, ere he can reach the Jerusalem above. In these spiritual

tactics, Dr. Owen was most profoundly skilled; and it is profitable to be instructed in the guardianship of the heart against its own treacheries, and against those evil influences which war against the soul—which hinder the outset, or are adverse to the growth, of the spiritual life—and which so often grieve the Spirit, and lead him to withdraw his gracious operations, so indispensable for giving the truth a sanctifying influence over his mind. And no less important is it to be instructed in the means for the successful cultivation of the Christian life; and, by an entire renunciation of self-righteousness, and even of dependence on grace already received—by casting himself, in the confidence of faith and of prayer, on Him who is all his strength and all his sufficiency—by being strong in the grace of the Lord Jesus—and by abounding in the exercises of faith and of love, of watchfulness and of prayer, of obedience and of dependence on the Spirit of truth, to maintain an evergrowing conformity to the divine image, and to press onwards in his earnest aspirings to reach those higher altitudes in the divine life, which will fit him for a high place among the companies of the celestial.

On the means for the attainment of these higher graces of the spiritual life we might have expatiated; but we must close our remarks, without almost one glance on the heights of Christian experience; or those loftier attainments after which we are ever doomed to aspire, but with hardly ever the satisfaction, in this world, of having realized them; or those high and heavenly communions, which fall to the lot of men of such a sublime sacredness as Dr. Owen;

but for which it would almost appear indispensable, that the spiritual life should be nourished in solitude, and that, afar from the din, and the broil, and the tumult of ordinary life, the candidate for heaven should give himself up to the discipline of prayer and of constant watchfulness. It is, indeed, most humbling to reflect on the paltry ascent that we have yet made along that hidden walk, by which it is that the pilgrim travels towards Zion; and how short we are, after years of something like earnestness, from those untouched and untrodden eminences which are so far above us. Where, may most of us ask, is our delight in God? Where is the triumph of our serene confidence in him, over all the anxieties of this world? Where that love to Christ, and that rejoicing in him, which, in the days of primitive Christianity, were so oft exemplified by the believer, and formed, in truth, the hourly and familiar habits of his soul? Do we count it enough, in the absence of this world's smiles, and when the whole sunshine of them is withdrawn from the bosom, that we still live amid the bright anticipations of Faith, with the protection of heaven above us, and the full radiance of eternity before us? These are the achievements to which we must yet press onward; and perhaps the sensation of a pressure that has yet been ineffectual, is the only evidence, in regard to them, which we can allege of a gracious tendency at least, if not of a gracious acquirement. It is the proof, not of what we have reached, but of the direction in which we are moving. And, at the very time that we are burdened under a feeling of our deficiencies, may we, from our constant inclination to

surmount them, and our many unsatisfied longings after the standard that is higher than ourselves, gather some perhaps of our most precious and legitimate encouragements in the work of self-examination.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

TO

CALL TO THE UNCONVERTED;

NOW OR NEVER; AND FIFTY REASONS.

BY RICHARD BAXTER.

HAVING already introduced to the notice of our readers one of RICHARD BAXTER's most valuable Treatises,* in the Essay to which we adverted to the character and writings of this venerable author, we count it unnecessary at present to make any allusion to them, but shall confine our remarks to the subject of the three Treatises which compose the present volume, namely, "A CALL TO THE UNCONVERTED TO TURN AND LIVE;" "NOW OR NEVER;" and "FIFTY REASONS WHY A SINNER OUGHT TO TURN TO GOD THIS DAY WITHOUT DELAY."

These Treatises are characterized by all that solemn earnestness, and urgency of appeal, for which the writings of this much-admired author are so peculiarly distinguished. He seems to look upon mankind solely with the eyes of the Spirit, and exclusively to recognize them in their spiritual relations, and in the great and essential elements of their immortal being. Their future destiny is the all-important concern which fills and engrosses

* The Saints' Everlasting Rest, with an Essay by Mr Erskine.

his mind, and he regards nothing of any magnitude but what has a distinct bearing on their spiritual and eternal condition. His business, therefore, is always with the conscience, to which, in these Treatises, he makes the most forcible appeals, and which he plys with all those arguments which are fitted to awaken the sinner to a deep sense of the necessity and importance of immediate repentance. In his "Call to the Unconverted," he endeavours to move them by the most touching of all representations, the tenderness of a beseeching God waiting to be gracious, and not willing that any should perish; and while he employs every form of entreaty, which tenderness and compassion can suggest, to allure the sinner to "turn and live," he does not shrink from forcing on his convictions those considerations which are fitted to alarm his fears, the terrors of the Lord, and the wrath, not merely of an offended Lawgiver, but of a God of love, whose threatenings he disregards, whose grace he despises, and whose mercy he rejects. And aware of the deceitfulness of sin in hardening the heart, and in betraying the sinner into a neglect of his spiritual interests, he divests him of every refuge, and strips him of every plea for postponing his preparation for eternity. He forcibly exposes the delusion of convenient seasons, and the awful infatuation and hazard of delay; and knowing the magnitude of the stake at issue, he urges the sinner to immediate repentance, as if the fearful and almost absolute alternative were "Now or Never." And to secure the commencement of such an important work against all the dangers to which procrastina-

tion might expose it, he endeavours to arrest the sinner in his career of guilt and unconcern, and resolutely to fix his determination on "turning to God this day without delay."

There are two very prevalent delusions on this subject, which we should like to expose; the one regards the *nature*, and the other the *season* of repentance; both of which are pregnant with mischief to the minds of men. With regard to the first, much mischief has arisen from mistakes respecting the meaning of the term *repentance*. The word repentance occurs with two different meanings in the New Testament; and it is to be regretted, that two different words could not have been devised to express these. This is chargeable upon the poverty of our language; for it is to be observed, that in the original Greek the distinction in the meanings is pointed out by a distinction in the words. The employment of one term to denote two different things has the effect of confounding and misleading the understanding; and it is much to be wished, that every ambiguity of this kind were cleared away from that most interesting point in the process of a human soul, at which it turns from sin unto righteousness, and from the power of Satan unto God.

When, in common language, a man says, "I repent of such an action," he is understood to say, "I am sorry for having done it." The feeling is familiar to all of us. How often does the man of dissipation prove this sense of the word repentance, when he awakes in the morning, and, oppressed by the languor of his exhausted faculties, looks

back with remorse on the follies and profligacies of the night that is past? How often does the man of unguarded conversation prove it, when he thinks of the friend whose feelings he has wounded, by some hasty utterance which he cannot recall? How often is it proved by the man of business, when he reflects on the rash engagement which ties him down to a losing speculation? All these people would be perfectly understood when they say, "We repent of these doings." The word repentance so applied is about equivalent to the word regret. There are several passages in the New Testament where this is the undoubted sense of the word repentance. In Matt. xxvii. 3, the wretched Judas repented himself of his treachery; and surely, when we think of the awful denunciation uttered by our Saviour against the man who should betray him, that it were better for him if he had not been born, we will never confound the repentance which Judas experienced with that repentance which is unto salvation.

Now here lies the danger to practical Christianity. In the above-cited passage, to repent is just to regret, or to be sorry for; and this we conceive to be by far the most prevailing sense of the term in the English language. But there are other places where the same term is employed to denote that which is urged upon us as a duty—that which is preached for the remission of sins—that which is so indispensable to sinners, as to call forth the declaration from our Saviour, that unless we have it, we shall all likewise perish. Now, though repentance, in all these cases, is expressed by the same

term in our translation as the repentance of mere regret, it is expressed by a different term in the original record of our faith. This surely might lead us to suspect a difference of meaning, and should caution us against taking up with that, as sufficient for the business of our salvation, which is short of saving and scriptural repentance. There may be an alternation of wilful sin, and of deeply-felt sorrow, up to the very end of our history—there may be a presumptuous sin committed every day, and a sorrow regularly succeeding it. Sorrow may imbitter every act of sin—sorrow may darken every interval of sinful indulgence—and sorrow may give an unutterable anguish to the pains and the prospects of a death-bed. Couple all this with the circumstance that sorrow passes, in the common currency of our language, for repentance, and that repentance is made, by our Bible, to lie at the turning point, from a state of condemnation to a state of acceptance with God; and it is difficult not to conceive that much danger may have arisen from this, leading to indistinct views of the nature of repentance, and to slender and superficial conceptions of the mighty change which is implied in it.

We are far from saying that the eye of Christians is not open to this danger—and that the vigilant care of Christian authors has not been employed in averting it. Where will we get a better definition of repentance unto life than in our Shorter Catechism? by which the sinner is represented not merely as grieving, but, along with his grief and hatred of sin, as turning from it unto God with full purpose of, and endeavour after new obedience.

But the mischief is, that the word repent has a common meaning, different from the theological; that wherever it is used, this common meaning is apt to intrude itself, and exert a kind of habitual imposition upon the understanding—that the influence of the single word carries it over the influence of the lengthened explanation—and thus it is that, for a steady progress in the obedience of the gospel, many persevere, to the end of their days, in a wretched course of sinning and of sorrowing, without fruit and without amendment.

To save the practically mischievous effect arising from the application of one term to two different things, one distinct and appropriate term has been suggested for the saving repentance of the New Testament. The term repentance itself has been restricted to the repentance of mere sorrow, and is made equivalent to regret; and for the other, able translators have adopted the word reformation. The one is expressive of sorrow for our past conduct; the other is expressive of our renouncing it. It denotes an actual turning from the habits of life that we are sorry for. Give us, say they, a change from bad deeds to good deeds, from bad habits to good habits, from a life of wickedness to a life of conformity to the requirements of heaven, and you give us reformation.

Now there is often nothing more unprofitable than a dispute about words: but if a word has got into common use, a common and generally understood meaning is attached to it; and if this meaning does not just come up to the thing which we want to express by it, the application of that word

to that thing has the same misleading effects as in the case already alluded to. Now, we have much the same kind of exception to allege against the term reformation, that we have alleged against the term repentance. The term repentance is inadequate—and why? because, in the common use of it, it is equivalent to regret, and regret is short of the saving change that is spoken of in the New Testament. On the very same principle, we count the term reformation to be inadequate. We think that, in common language, a man would receive the appellation of a reformed man upon the mere change of his outward habits, without any reference to the change of mind and of principle which gave rise to it. Let the drunkard give up his excesses —let the backbiter give up his evil speakings—let the extortioner give up his unfair charges—and we would apply to one and all of them, upon the mere change of their external doings, the character of reformed men. Now, it is evident that the drunkard may gave up his drunkenness, because checked by a serious impression of the injury he has been doing to his health and his circumstances. The backbiter may give up his evil speaking, on being made to perceive that the hateful practice has brought upon him the contempt and alienation of his neighbours. The extortioner may give up his unfair charges, upon taking it into calculation that his business is likely to suffer by the desertion of his customers. Now, it is evident, that though in each of these cases there has been what the world would call reformation, there has not been scriptural repentance. The deficiency of this term

consists in its having been employed to denote a mere change in the deeds or in the habits of the outward man; and if employed as equivalent to repentance, it may delude us into the idea that the change by which we are made meet for a happy eternity is a far more slender and superficial thing than it really is. It is of little importance to be told that the translator means it only in the sense of a reformed conduct, proceeding from the influence of a new and a right principle within. The common meaning of the word will, as in the former instance, be ever and anon intruding itself, and get the better of all the formal cautions, and all the qualifying clauses of our Bible commentators.

But, will not the original word itself throw some light upon this important question? The repentance which is enjoined as a duty—the repentance which is unto salvation—the repentance which sinners undergo when they pass to a state of acceptance with God from a state of enmity against him—these are all one and the same thing, and are expressed by one and the same word in the original language of the New Testament. It is different from the word which expresses the repentance of sorrow; and if translated according to the parts of which it is composed, it signifies neither more nor less than *a change of mind.** This of itself is sufficient to prove the inadequacy of the term reformation—a term which is often applied to a man upon the mere change of his conduct, without ever adverting to the state of his mind, or to the kind of change in motive and in principle which it has undergone. It is true that there can be no change

in the conduct without some change in the inward principle. A reformed drunkard, before careless about health or fortune, may be so far changed as to become impressed with these considerations; but this change is evidently short of that which the Bible calls repentance toward God. It is a change that may, and has taken place in many a mind, when there was no effectual sense of the God who is above us, and of the eternity which is before us. It is a change, brought about by the prospect and the calculation of many advantages; and, in the enjoyment of these advantages, it hath its sole reward. But it is not done unto God, and God will not accept of it as done unto him. Reformation may signify nothing more than the mere surface-dressing of those decencies, and proprieties, and accomplishments, and civil and prudential duties, which, however fitted to secure a man's acceptance in society, may, one and all of them, consist with a heart alienated from God, and having every principle and affection of the inner man away from him. True it is, such a change as the man will reap benefit from, as his friends will rejoice in, as the world will call reformation; but it is not such a change as will make him meet for heaven, and is deficient in its import from what our Saviour speaks of when he says, "I tell you nay, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

There is no single word in the English language which occurs to us as fully equal to the faithful rendering of the term in the original. Renewedness of mind, however awkward a phrase this may be, is perhaps the most nearly expressive of it.

Certain it is, that it harmonizes with those other passages of the Bible where the process is described by which saving repentance is brought about. We read of being transformed by the renewing of our minds, of the renewing of the Holy Ghost, of being renewed in the spirit of our minds. Scriptural repentance, therefore, is that deep and radical change whereby a soul turns from the idols of sin and of self unto God and devotes every movement of the inner and the outer man, to the captivity of his obedience. This is the change which, whether it be expressed by one word or not in the English language, we would have you well to understand; and reformation or change in the outward conduct, instead of being saving and scriptural repentance, is what, in the language of John the Baptist, we would call a fruit meet for it. But if mischief is likely to arise, from the want of an adequate word in our language, to that repentance which is unto salvation, there is one effectual preservative against it—a firm and consistent exhibition of the whole counsel and revelation of God. A man who is well read in his New Testament, and reads it with docility, will dismiss all his meagre conceptions of repentance, when he comes to the following statements:—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." "The carnal mind is enmity against God; and if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye, through the

Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." "By the washing of regeneration ye are saved." "Be not then conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds." Such are the terms employed to describe the process by which the soul of man is renewed unto repentance; and, with your hearts familiarized to the mighty import of these terms, you will carry with you an effectual guarantee against those false and flimsy impressions, which are so current in the world, about the preparation of a sinner for eternity.

Another delusion which we shall endeavour to expose, is a very mischievous application of the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, contained in the twentieth chapter of the Gospel by Matthew. The interpretation of this parable, the mischief and delusion of which we shall endeavour to lay open, is, that it relates to the call of individuals, and to the different periods in the age of each individual at which this call is accepted by them. We almost know nothing more familiar to us, both in the works of authors, and in the conversation of private Christians, than when the repentance of an aged man is the topic, it is represented as a case of repentance at the eleventh hour of the day. We are far from disputing the possibility of such a repentance, nor should those who address the message of the gospel ever be restrained from the utterance of the free call of the gospel, in the hearing of the oldest and most inveterate sinner whom they may meet with. But what we contend for, is, that this is not the drift of the

parable. The parable relates to the call of nations, and to the different periods in the age of the world at which this call was addressed to each of them, and not as we have already observed, to the call of individuals, and to the different periods in the age of each individual, at which this call is accepted by them.* It is not true that the labourers who

* To render our argument more intelligible, we shall briefly state what we conceive to be the true explanation of the parable. In the verses preceding the parable, Peter had stated the whole amount of the surrender that he and his fellow disciples had made by the act of following after Jesus; and it is evident, that they all looked forward to some great temporal remuneration—some share in the glories of the Israelitish monarchy—some place of splendour or distinction under that new government, which they imagined was to be set up in the world; and they never conceived any thing else, than that in this altered state of things, the people of their own country were to be raised to high pre-eminence among the nations which had oppressed and degraded them. It was in the face of this expectation, that our Saviour uttered a sentence, which we meet oftener than once among His recorded sayings in the New Testament, "Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first." The Israelites, whom God distinguished at an early period of the world, by a revelation of Himself, were first invited in the doing of His will (which is fitly enough represented by working in His vineyard) to the possession of His favour, and the enjoyment of His rewards. This offer to work in that peculiar vineyard, where God assigned to them a performance, and bestowed on them a recompense, was made to Abraham and to his descendants at a very early period in history; and a succession of prophets and righteous men were sent to renew the offer, and the communications from God to the world, followed the stream of ages, down to the time of the utterance of this parable. And a few years afterwards, the same offers, and the same invitations, were addressed to another people; and at this late period, at this eleventh hour, the men of those countries which had never before been visited by any authoritative call from heaven, had this call lifted up in their hearing, and many Gentiles accepted that everlasting life, of which the Jews counted themselves unworthy. And as to the people of Israel, who valued themselves so much on their privileges—who had turned all the revelations, by which their ancestors had been honoured, into a matter of distinction and of vain security—who had ever been in the habit of eyeing the profane Gentiles with all that contempt which is laid upon outcasts,

began to work in the vineyard on the first hour of the day, denote those Christians who began to remember their Creator, and to render the obedience of the faith unto his Gospel with their first and earliest education. It is not true, that they who entered into this service on the third hour of the day, denote those Christians, who after a boyhood of thoughtless unconcern about the things of eternity, are arrested in the season of youth, by a visitation of seriousness, and betake themselves to the faith and the following of the Saviour who died for them. It is not true, that they who were hired on the sixth and ninth hours, denote those Christians, who, after having spent the prime of their youthful vigour in alienation from God, and perhaps run out some mad career of guilt and profligacy, put on their Christianity along with the decencies of their sober and established manhood. Neither is it true, that the labourers of the eleventh hour, the men who had stood all day idle, represent those aged converts who have put off their repent-

this parable received its fulfilment at the time when these Gentiles, by their acceptance of the Saviour, were exalted to an equal place among the chiefest favourites of God; and these Jews, by their refusal of Him, had their name rooted out from among the nations—and those first and foremost in all the privileges of religion, are now become the last. Now this we conceive to be the real design of the parable. It was designed to reconcile the minds of the disciples to that part of the economy of God, which was most offensive to their hopes and to their prejudices. It asserted the sovereignty of the Supreme Being in the work of dispensing His calls and His favours among the people whom He had formed. It furnished a most decisive and silencing reproof to the Jews, who were filled with envy against the Gentiles; and who, even those of them that embraced the Christian profession, made an obstinate struggle against the admission of those Gentiles into the church on equal terms with themselves.

ance to the last—those men who have renounced the world when they could not help it—those men who have put on Christianity, but not till they had put on their wrinkles—those men who have run the varied stages of depravity, from the frivolous unconcern of a boy, and the appalling enormities of misled and misguided youth, and the deep and determined worldliness of middle age, and the clinging avarice of him, who, while with slow and tottering footsteps he descends the hill of life, has a heart more obstinately set than ever on all its interests, and all its sordid accumulations, but who, when death taps at the door, awakens from his dream, and thinks it now time to shake away his idolatrous affections from the mammon of unrighteousness.

Such are the men who, after having taken their full swing of all that the world could offer, and of all that they could enjoy of it, defer the whole work of preparation for eternity to old age, and for the hire of the labourers of the eleventh hour, do all that they can in the way of sighs, and sorrows, and expiations of penitential acknowledgment. What! will we offer to liken such men to those who sought the Lord early, and who found him? Will we say that he who repents when old, is at all to be compared to him, who bore the whole heat and burden of a life devoted throughout all its stages to the glory and the remembrance of the Creator? Who, from a child, trembled at the word of the Lord, and aspired after a conformity to all his ways? Who, when a young man, fulfilled that most appropriate injunction of the apostle, "Be thou

strong?". Who fought it with manly determination against all the enemies of principle by which he was surrounded, and spurned the enticements of vicious acquaintances away from him; and nobly stood it out, even though unsupported and alone, against the unhallowed contempt of a whole multitude of scorners; and with intrepid defiance to all the assaults of ridicule, maintained a firmness, which no wile could seduce from the posts of vigilance; and cleared his unfaltering way through all the allurements of a perverse and crooked generation. Who, even in the midst of a most withering atmosphere on every side of him, kept all his purposes unbroken, and all his delicacies untainted. Who, with the rigour of self-command, combined the softening lustre which a pure and amiable modesty sheds over the moral complexion of him who abhors that which is evil, and cleaves to that which is good, with all the energy of a holy determination. Can that be a true interpretation, which levels this youth of promise and of accomplishment, with his equal in years, who is now prosecuting every guilty indulgence, and crowns the audacity of his rebellion by the mad presumption, that ere he dies, he shall be able to propitiate that God, on the authority of all whose calls, and all whose remonstrances he is now trampling? Or follow each of them to the evening of their earthly pilgrimage—will you say that the penitent of the eleventh hour, is at all to be likened to him who has given the whole of his existence to the work and the labour of Christianity? to him who, after a morning of life adorned with all the gracefulness we have attempted to describe,

sustains through the whole of his subsequent history such a high and ever brightening example, that his path is like the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day; and every year he lives, the graces of an advancing sanctification form into a richer assemblage of all that is pure, and lovely, and honourable, and of good report; and when old age comes, it brings none of the turbulence or alarm of an unfinished preparation along with it—but he meets death with the quiet assurance of a man who is in readiness, and hails his message as a friendly intimation; and as he lived in the splendour of ever-increasing acquirements, so he dies in all the radiance of anticipated glory.

This interpretation of the parable cannot be sustained; and we think, that, out of its own mouth, a condemnation may be stamped upon it. Mark this peculiarity. The labourers of the eleventh hour are not men who got the offer before, but men who for the first time received a call to work in the vineyard; and they may therefore well represent the people of a country, who, for the first time, received the overtures of the Gospel. The answer they gave to the question, Why stand you so long idle? was, that no man had hired them. We do not read of any of the labourers of the third, or sixth, or ninth hours, refusing the call at these times, and afterwards rendering a compliance with the evening call, and getting the penny for which they declined the offer of working several hours, but afterwards agreed when the proposal was made, that they should work one hour only. They had

a very good answer to give, in excuse for their idleness. They never had been called before. And the oldest men of a Pagan country have the very same answer to give, on the first arrival of Christian missionaries amongst them. But we have no part nor lot in this parable. We have it not in our power to offer any such apology. There is not one of us who can excuse the impenitency of the past, on the plea that no man had called us. This is a call that has been sounded in our ears, from our very infancy. Every time we have seen a Bible in our shelves, we have had a call. Every time we have heard a minister in the pulpit, we have had a call. Every time we have heard the generous invitation, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye unto the waters," we have had a solemn, and what ought to have been a most impressive, call. Every time that a parent has plied us with a good advice, or a neighbour come forward with a friendly persuasion, we have had a call. Every time that the Sabbath bell has rung for us to the house of God, we have had a call. These are all so many distinct and repeated calls. These are past events in our life, which rise in judgment against us, and remind us, with a justice of argument that there is no evading, that we have no right whatever to the privileges of the eleventh hour.

This, then, is the train to which we feel ourselves directed by this parable. The mischievous interpretation which has been put upon it, has wakened up our alarms, and set us to look at the delusion which it fosters, and, if possible, to drag

out to the light of day, the fallacy which lies in it. We should like to reduce every man to the feeling of the alternative of repentance now, or repentance never. We should like to flash it upon your convictions, that, by putting the call away from you now, you put your eternity away from you. We should like to expose the whole amount of that accursed infatuation which lies in delay. We should like to arouse every soul out of its lethargies, and giving no quarter to the plea of a little more sleep, and a little more slumber, we should like you to feel as if the whole of your future destiny hinged on the very first movement to which you turned yourselves.

The work of repentance must have a beginning; and we should like you to know, that, if not begun to-day, the chance will be less of its being begun to-morrow. And if the greater chance has failed, what hope can we build upon the smaller?—and a chance too that is always getting smaller. Each day, as it revolves over the sinner's head, finds him a harder, and a more obstinate, and a more helplessly enslaved sinner, than before. It was this consideration which gave Richard Baxter such earnestness and such urgency in his "Call." He knew that the barrier in the way of the sinner's return, was strengthened by every act of resistance to the call which urges it. That the refusal of this moment hardened the man against the next attack of a gospel argument that is brought to bear upon him. That if he attempted you now, and he failed, when he came back upon you, he would find himself working on a more obstinate and un-

complying subject than ever. And therefore it is, that he ever feels as if the present were his only opportunity. That he is now upon his vantage ground, and he gives every energy of his soul to the great point of making the most of it. He will put up with none of your evasions. He will consent to none of your postponements. He will pay respect to none of your more convenient seasons. He tells you, that the matter with which he is charged, has all the urgency of a matter in hand. He speaks to you with as much earnestness as if he knew that you were going to step into eternity in half an hour. He delivers his message with as much solemnity as if he knew that this was your last meeting on earth, and that you were never to see each other till you stood together at the judgment-seat. He knew that some mighty change must take place in you, ere you be fit for entering into the presence of God; and that the time in which, on every plea of duty and of interest, you should bestir yourselves to secure this, is the present time. This is the distinct point he assigns to himself; and the whole drift of his argument, is to urge an instantaneous choice of the better part, by telling you how you multiply every day the obstacles to your future repentance, if you begin not the work of repentance now.

Before bringing our Essay to a close, we shall make some observations on the mistakes concerning repentance which we have endeavoured to expose, and adduce some arguments for urging on the consciences of our readers the necessity and importance of immediate repentance.

I. The work of repentance is a work which must be done ere we die; for, unless we repent, we shall all likewise perish. Now, the easier this work is in our conception, we will think it the less necessary to enter upon it immediately. We will look upon it as a work that may be done at any time, and let us, therefore, put it off a little longer, and a little longer. We will perhaps look forward to that retirement from the world and its temptations which we figure old age to bring along with it, and falling in with the too common idea, that the evening of life is the appropriate season of preparation for another world, we will think that the author is bearing too closely and too urgently upon us, when, in the language of the Bible, he speaks of "*to-day*," while it is called to-day, and will let us off with no other repentance than repentance "*now*,"—seeing that now only is the accepted time, and now only the day of salvation, which he has a warrant to proclaim to us. This dilatory way of it is very much favoured by the mistaken and very defective view of repentance which we have attempted to expose. We have somehow or other got into the delusion, that repentance is sorrow, and little else; and were we called to fix upon the scene where this sorrow is likely to be felt in the degree that is deepest and most overwhelming, we would point to the chamber of the dying man. It is awful to think that, generally speaking, this repentance of mere sorrow is the only repentance of a death-bed. Yes! we will mee with sensibility deep enough and painful enough there—with regret in all its bitterness—with terror

mustering up its images of despair, and dwelling upon them in all the gloom of an affrighted imagination; and this is mistaken, not merely for the drapery of repentance, but for the very substance of it. We look forward, and we count upon this —that the sins of a life are to be expunged by the sighing and the sorrowing of the last days of it. We should give up this wretchedly superficial notion of repentance, and cease, from this moment, to be led astray by it. The mind may sorrow over its corruptions at the very time that it is under the power of them. To grieve because we are under the captivity of sin is one thing—to be released from that captivity is another. A man may weep most bitterly over the perversities of his moral constitution; but to change that constitution is a different affair. Now, this is the mighty work of repentance. He who has undergone it is no longer the servant of sin. He dies unto sin, he lives unto God. A sense of the authority of God is ever present with him, to wield the ascendancy of a great master-principle over all his movements —to call forth every purpose, and to carry it forward, through all the opposition of sin and of Satan, into accomplishment. This is the grand revolution in the state of the mind which repentance brings along with it. To grieve because this work is not done, is a very different thing from the doing of it. A death-bed is the very best scene for acting the first; but it is the very worst for acting the second. The repentance of Judas has often been acted there. We ought to think of the work in all its magnitude, and not to put it off to

that awful period when the soul is crowded with other things, and has to maintain its weary struggle with the pains, and the distresses, and the shiverings, and the breathless agonies of a death-bed.

2. There are two views that may be taken of the way in which repentance is brought about, and which ever of them is adopted, delay carries along with it the saddest infatuation. It may be looked upon as a step taken by man as a voluntary agent, and we would ask you, upon your experience of the powers and the performances of humanity, if a death-bed is the time for taking such a step? Is this a time for a voluntary being exercising a vigorous control over his own movements? When racked with pain, and borne down by the pressure of a sore and overwhelming calamity? Surely the greater the work of repentance is, the more ease, the more time, the more freedom from suffering, is necessary for carrying it on; and, therefore, addressing you as voluntary beings, as beings who will and who do, we call upon you to seek God early that you may find him—to haste, and make no delay in keeping his commandments. The other view is, that repentance is not a self-originating work in man, but the work of the Holy Spirit in him as the subject of its influences. This view is not opposite to the former. It is true that man wills and does at every step in the business of his salvation; and it is as true that God works in him so to will and to do. Take this last view of it then. Look on repentance as the work of God's Spirit in the soul of man, and we are furnished with a more impressive argument than ever, and set on

higher vantage for urging you to stir yourselves, and set about it immediately. What is it that you propose? To keep by your present habits, and your present indulgencies—and build yourselves up all the while in the confidence that the Spirit will interpose with His mighty power of conversion upon you, at the very point of time that you have fixed upon as convenient and agreeable? And how do you conciliate the Spirit's answer to your call then? Why, by doing all you can to grieve, and to quench, and to provoke Him to abandon you now. Do you feel a motion towards repentance at this moment? If you keep it alive, and act upon it, good and well. But if you smother and suppress this motion, you resist the Spirit—you stifle His movements within you: it is what the impenitent do day after day, and year after year—and is this the way for securing the influences of the Spirit, at the time that you would like them best? When you are done with the world, and are looking forward to eternity because you cannot help it? God says, "My Spirit will not always strive with the children of men." A good and a free Spirit He undoubtedly is, and, as a proof of it, He is now saying, "Let whosoever will, come and drink of the water of life freely." He says so now, but we do not promise that He will say so with effect upon your death-beds, if you refuse Him now. You look forward then for a powerful work of conversion being done upon you, and yet you employ yourselves all your life long in raising and multiplying obstacles against it. You count upon a miracle of grace before you die, and the way you take to

make yourselves sure of it, is to grieve and offend Him while you live, who alone can perform the miracle. O what cruel deceits will sin land us in! and how artfully it pleads for a "little more sleep, and a little more slumber; a litfle more folding of the hands to sleep." We should hold out no longer, nor make not such an abuse of the forbearance of God: we will treasure up wrath against the day of wrath if we do so. The genuine effect of his goodness is to lead to repentance; let not its effect upon us be to harden and encourage ourselves in the ways of sin. We should cry now for the clean heart and the right spirit; and such is the exceeding freeness of the Spirit of God, that we will be listened to. If we put off the cry till then, the same God may laugh at our calamity, and mock when our fear cometh.

3. Our next argument for immediate repentance is, that we cannot bring forward, at any future period of your history, any considerations of a more prevailing or more powerfully moving influence than those we *may* bring forward at this moment. We can tell you now of the terrors of the Lord. We can tell you now of the solemn mandates which have issued from his throne—and the authority of which is upon one and all of you. We can tell you now, that though, in this dead and darkened world, sin appears but a very trivial affair—for every body sins, and it is shielded from execration by the universal countenance of an entire species lying in wickedness—yet it holds true of God, what is so emphatically said of him, that he cannot be mocked, nor will he endure it that you should riot in the impunity of

your wilful resistance to him and to his warnings. We can tell you now, that he is a God of vengeance; and though, for a season, he is keeping back all the thunders of it from a world that he would like to reclaim unto himself, yet, if you put all his expostulations away from you, and will not be reclaimed, these thunders will be let loose upon you, and they will fall on your guilty heads, armed with tenfold energy, because you have not only defied his threats, but turned your back on his offers of reconciliation. These are the arguments by which we would try to open our way to your consciences, and to waken up your fears, and to put the inspiring activity of hope into your bosoms, by laying before you those invitations which are addressed to the sinner, through the peace-speaking blood of Jesus, and, in the name of a beseeching God, to win your acceptance of them. At no future period can we address arguments more powerful and more affecting than these. If these arguments do not prevail upon you, we know of none others by which a victory over the stubborn and uncomplying will can be accomplished, or by which we can ever hope to beat in that sullen front of resistance wherewith you now so impregnably withstand us. We feel that, if any stout-hearted sinner shall rise from the perusal of these Treatises with an unawakened conscience, and give himself to an act of wilful disobedience, we feel as if, in reference to him, we had made our last discharge, and it fell powerless as water spilt on the ground, that cannot be gathered up again. We would not cease to ply him with our arguments, and tell him, to the hour of death, of the Lord God,

merciful and gracious, who is not willing that any should perish, but that all should turn to him, and live. And if in future life we should meet him at the eleventh hour of his dark and deceitful day—a hoary sinner, sinking under the decrepitude of age, and bending on the side of the grave that is open to receive him—even then we would testify the exceeding freeness of the grace of God, and implore his acceptance of it. But how could it be away from our minds that he is not one of the evening labourers of the parable? We had met with him at former periods of his existence, and the offer we make him now we made him then, and he did what the labourers of the third, and sixth, and ninth hours of the parable did not do—he rejected our call to hire him into the vineyard; and this heartless recollection, if it did not take all our energy away from us, would leave us little else than the energy of despair. And therefore it is, that we speak to you now as if this was our last hold of you. We feel as if on your present purpose hung all the preparations of your future life, and all the rewards or all the horrors of your coming eternity. We will not let you off with any other repentance than repentance now; and if this be refused now, we cannot, with our eyes open to the consideration we have now urged, that the instrument we make to bear upon you afterwards is not more powerful than we are wielding now, coupled with another consideration which we shall insist upon, that the subject on which the instrument worketh, even the heart of man, gathers, by every act of resistance, a more uncomplying obstinacy than before; we cannot, with

these two thoughts in our mind, look forward to your future history, without seeing spread over the whole path of it the iron of a harder impenitency —the sullen gloom of a deeper and more determined alienation.

4. Another argument, therefore, for immediate repentance is, that the mind which resists a present call or a present reproof, undergoes a progressive hardening towards all those considerations which arm the call of repentance with all its energy. It is not enough to say, that the instrument by which repentance is brought about, is not more powerful to-morrow than it is to-day; it lends a most tremendous weight to the argument, to say further, that the subject on which this instrument is putting forth its efficiency, will oppose a firmer resistance to-morrow than it does to-day. It is this which gives a significancy so powerful to the call of "To-day while it is to-day, harden not your hearts;" and to the admonition of "Knowest thou not, O man, that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance; but after, thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgments of God?" It is not said, either in the one or in the other of these passages, that, by the present refusal, you cut yourself off from a future invitation. The invitation may be sounded in your hearing to the last half hour of your earthly existence, engraved in all those characters of free and gratuitous kindness which mark the beneficent religion of the New Testament. But the present refusal hardens you against the power and tenderness of the future invitation. This

is the fact in human nature to which these passages seem to point, and it is the fact through which the argument for immediate repentance receives such powerful aid from the wisdom of experience. It is this which forms the most impressive proof of the necessity of plying the young with all the weight and all the tenderness of earnest admonition, that the now susceptible mind might not turn into a substance harder and more uncomplying than the rock which is broken in pieces by the powerful application of the hammer of the word of God.

The metal of the human soul, so to speak, is like some material substances. If the force you lay upon it do not break it, or dissolve it, it will beat it into hardness. If the moral argument by which it is plied now, do not so soften the mind as to carry and to overpower its purposes, then, on another day, the argument may be put forth in terms as impressive—but it falls on a harder mind, and, therefore, with a more slender efficiency. If the threat, that ye who persist in sin shall have to dwell with the devouring fire, and to lie down amid everlasting burnings, do not alarm you out of your iniquities from this very moment, then the same threat may be again cast out, and the same appalling circumstances of terror be thrown around it, but it is all discharged on a soul hardened by its inurement to the thunder of denunciations already uttered, and the urgency of menacing threatenings already poured forth without fruit and without efficacy. If the voice of a beseeching God do not win upon you now, and charm you out of your rebellion against him, by the persuasive energy of

kindness, then let that voice be lifted in your hearing on some future day, and though armed with all the power of tenderness it ever had, how shall it find its entrance into a heart sheathed by the operation of habit, that universal law, in more impenetrable obstinacy? If, with the earliest dawn of your understanding, you have been offered the hire of the morning labourer and have refused it, then the parable does not say that you are the person who at the third, or sixth, or ninth, or eleventh hour, will get the offer repeated to you. It is true, that the offer is unto all and upon all who are within reach of the hearing of it. But there is all the difference in the world between the impression of a new offer, and of an offer that has already been often heard and as often rejected—an offer which comes upon you with all the familiarity of a well-known sound that you have already learned how to dispose of, and how to shut your every feeling against the power of its gracious invitations —an offer which, if discarded from your hearts at the present moment, may come back upon you, but which will have to maintain a more unequal contest than before, with an impenitency ever strengthening, and ever gathering new hardness from each successive act of resistance. And thus it is that the point for which we are contending is not to carry you at some future period of your lives, but to carry you at this moment. It is to work in you the instantaneous purpose of a firm and a vigorously sustained repentance; it is to put into you all the freshness of an immediate resolution, and to stir you up to all the readiness of an imme-

diate accomplishment—it is to give direction to the very first footstep you are now to take, and lead you to take it as the commencement of that holy career, in which all old things are done away, and all things become new—it is to press it upon you, that the state of the alternative, at this moment, is "now or never"—it is to prove how fearful the odds are against you, if now you suffer the call of repentance to light upon your consciences, and still keep by your determined posture of careless, and thoughtless, and thankless unconcern about God. You have resisted to-day, and by that resistance you have acquired a firmer metal of resistance against the power of every future warning that may be brought to bear upon you. You have stood your ground against the urgency of the most earnest admonitions, and against the dreadfulness of the most terrifying menaces. On that ground you have fixed yourself more immoveably than before; and though on some future day the same spiritual thunder be made to play around you, it will not shake you out of the obstinacy of your determined rebellion.

It is the universal law of habit, that the feelings are always getting more faintly and feebly impressed by every repetition of the cause which excited them, and that the mind is always getting stronger in its active resistance to the impulse of these feelings, by every new deed of resistance which it performs; and thus it is, that if you refuse us now, we have no other prospect before us than that your cause is every day getting more desperate and more irrecoverable, your souls are getting more

hardened, the Spirit is getting more provoked to abandon those who have so long persisted in their opposition to his movements. God, who says that his Spirit will not always strive with the children of men, is getting more offended. The tyranny of habit is getting every day a firmer ascendancy over you; Satan is getting you more helplessly involved among his wiles and his entanglements; the world, with all the inveteracy of those desires which are opposite to the will of the Father, is more and more lording it over your every affection. And what, we would ask, what is the scene in which you are now purposing to contest it, with all this mighty force of opposition you are now so busy in raising up against you? What is the field of combat to which you are now looking forward, as the place where you are to accomplish a victory over all those formidable enemies whom you are at present arming with such a weight of hostility, as, we say, within a single hair-breadth of certainty, you will find to be irresistible? O the bigness of such a misleading infatuation! The proposed scene in which this battle for eternity is to be fought, and this victory for the crown of glory is to be won, is a death-bed. It is when the last messenger stands by the couch of the dying man, and shakes at him the terrors of his grisly countenance, that the poor child of infatuation thinks he is to struggle and prevail against all his enemies; against the unrelenting tyranny of habit—against the obstinacy of his own heart, which he is now doing so much to harden—against the Spirit of God who perhaps long ere now has pronounced the doom

upon him, "He will take his own way, and walk in his own counsel; I shall cease from striving, and let him alone"—against Satan, to whom every day of his life he has given some fresh advantage over him, and who will not be willing to lose the victim on whom he has practised so many wiles, and plied with success so many delusions. And such are the enemies whom you, who wretchedly calculate on the repentance of the eleventh hour, are every day mustering up in greater force and formidableness against you; and how can we think of letting you go, with any other repentance than the repentance of the precious moment that is now passing over you, when we look forward to the horrors of that impressive scene, on which you propose to win the prize of immortality, and to contest it single-handed and alone, with all the weight of opposition which you have accumulated against yourselves—a death-bed—a languid, breathless, tossing, and agitated death-bed; that scene of feebleness, when the poor man cannot help himself to a single mouthful—when he must have attendants to sit around him, and watch his every wish, and interpret his every signal, and turn him to every posture where he may find a moment's ease, and wipe away the cold sweat that is running over him—and ply him with cordials for thirst, and sickness, and insufferable languor. And this is the time, when occupied with such feelings, and beset with such agonies as these, you propose to crowd within the compass of a few wretched days, the work of winding up the concerns of a neglected eternity!

5. But it may be said, if repentance be what you represent it, a thing of such mighty import, and such impracticable performance, as a *change of mind*, in what rational way can it be made the subject of a precept or an injunction? you would not call upon the Ethiopian to change his skin—you would not call upon the leopard to change his spots; and yet you call upon us to change our minds. You say, "Repent;" and that too in the face of the undeniable doctrine, that man is without strength for the achievement of so mighty an enterprise. Can you tell us any plain and practicable thing that you would have us to perform, and that we may perform to help on this business? This is the very question with which the hearers of John the Baptist came back upon him, after he had told them in general terms to repent, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. He may not have resolved the difficulty, but he pointed the expectations of his countrymen to a greater than he for the solution of it. Now that Teacher has already come, and we live under the full and the finished splendour of His revelation. O that the greatness and difficulty of the work of repentance, had the effect of shutting you up into the faith of Christ! Repentance is not a paltry, superficial reformation. It reaches deep into the inner man, but not too deep for the searching influences of that Spirit which is at His giving, and which worketh mightily in the hearts of believers. You should go then under a sense of your difficulty to Him. Seek to be rooted in the Saviour, that you may be nourished out of His fulness, and

strengthened by His might. The simple cry for a clean heart, and a right spirit, which is raised from the mouth of a believer, brings down an answer from on high, which explains all the difficulty and overcomes it. And if what we have said of the extent and magnitude of repentance, should have the effect to give a deeper feeling than before of the wants under which you labour; and shall dispose you to seek after a closer and more habitual union with Him who alone can supply them, then will our call to repent have indeed fulfilled upon you the appointed end of a preparation for the Saviour. But recollect now is your time, and now is your opportunity, for entering on the road of preparation that leads to heaven. We charge you to enter this road at this moment, as you value your deliverance from hell, and your possession of that blissful place where you shall be for ever with the Lord—we charge you not to parry and to delay this matter, no not for a single hour—we call on you by all that is great in eternity—by all that is terrifying in its horrors—by all that is alluring in its rewards—by all that is binding in the authority of God—by all that is condemning in the severity of His violated law, and by all that can aggravate this condemnation in the insulting contempt of His rejected gospel;—we call on you by one and all of these considerations, not to hesitate but to flee—not to purpose a return for to-morrow, but to make an actual return *this very day*—to put a decisive end to every plan of wickedness on which you may have entered—to cease your hands from all that is forbidden—to turn them to all that is required—to

betake yourselves to the appointed Mediator, and receive through Him, by the prayer of faith, such constant supplies of the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, that, from this moment, you may be carried forward from one degree of grace unto another, and from a life devoted to God here, to the elevation of a triumphant, and the joys of a blissful eternity hereafter.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

TO THE

CHRISTIAN'S DAILY WALK

IN HOLY SECURITY AND PEACE.

By THE REV. HENRY SCUDDER.

It is well known that though Christianity was persecuted by the Jews from the very outset of its promulgation, it was some time before this religion provoked the wrath or the intolerance of the Romans. The truth is, that on the part of the government at Rome, there was a very general connivance at religion in all its numerous varieties. And the reason of this was, that under the system of Paganism no one variety, or modification, was thought to exclude another. Each country was conceived to have its local deity—and each element of Nature to have its own pervading spirit—and each new god of the provinces over which they extended their power, offered no disturbance to the habits of their previous theology, but was easily disposed of by the bare addition of another name to the catalogue. At this rate there was no conflict and no interference. By learning the religion of another country, they simply extended their acquaintance with the world of supernatural beings; just as by the conquest of that country, they

extended their acquaintance with the visible and the peopled world around them. In such a capacibus and elastic creed as that of Paganism, there was room enough for all the superstitions of all people. The sincerest possible homage for the gods of one territory, admitted of an homage equally sincere for the gods of another territory. Nay, by the same solemn act of worship, they may, each and all of them, have been included, at one time, in one general expression of faith and reverence. And this is the whole amount of the boasted tolerance of antiquity.

We may easily perceive, how, in exception to this general spirit, Christianity, from being the object of lenity, and even of occasional protection by the Roman power, soon became the victim of its fiercest persecutions. For a few years, its character and pretensions were not distinctly understood. It seems in truth to have been regarded as a mere speciality of Judaism, and even though it had partaken of all the narrowness of the parent religion from which it sprung, yet would it have continued to share in the same immunities, had it maintained the same indolent contempt for the idolatry of the surrounding nations. But when it made a farther development of its spirit; when it began to be felt in the force of its active proselytism; when it was seen, that it not only admitted of no compromise with the articles of another faith, but that it aimed at the overthrow of every religion then in the world; when men at last perceived, that instead of quietly taking its place among their much-loved superstitions, it threatened the destruction of them all,—

then, though truth and argument were its only weapons, did the success with which they were wielded as much offend and terrify the world as if they had been the weapons of ordinary warfare; and though Jesus Christ would have been welcomed to a share of divine honours along with other deities, were his followers resisted even unto blood, when they advanced his claim, not to be added to the list of those deities, but utterly to discard and dethrone them.

Now it may be thought that there can be nothing analogous to this process in the present day, and within the limits of Christendom. But the truth is, that what obtained among the literal idolaters of a former age, is still more strikingly exemplified by those of the present, who, in the spiritual and substantial sense of the word, are chargeable with the whole guilt of idolatry. There may be among us the most complacent toleration for a mitigated and misconceived Christianity, while there is no toleration whatever for the real Christianity of the New Testament. So long as it only claims an assigned place in the history of man, while it leaves the heart of man in the undisturbed possession of all its native and inborn propensities—so long as it confines itself to the demand of a little room for its Sabbaths and its decencies, while it leaves the general system of human life to move as before, at the impulse of those old principles which have characterized the mind of man throughout all the generations of the world so long as it exacts no more than an occasional act of devotion, while it suffers the objects of wealth and fame, and tem

poral enjoyments, to be prosecuted with as intense and habitual a devotion as ever—above all, so long as the services which it imposes are not other than the services which would have been rendered at all events to the idol of interest, or the idol of reputation,—then Christianity, so far from being the object of any painful recoil on the part of man, is looked upon, by very many in society, as a seemly and most desirable appendage to the whole mass of their other concerns. It is admitted to fill up what would be felt as a disagreeable vacuity. The man would positively be out of comfort, and out of adjustment, without it. Meagre as his Christianity may be, the omission of certain of its rites, and certain of its practices, would give him uneasiness. It has its own place in the round of his affairs, and though what remains of the round is described very much in the way it would have been, had there been no Christianity in the matter, yet would the entire and absolute want of it make him feel, as if the habit of his life had undergone a mutilation, as if the completeness of his practical system had suffered violence.

And thus it is, that Christianity, in a moderate and superficial form, may be gladly acquiesced in, while Christianity after it comes to be understood in the magnitude of its pretensions may be utterly nauseated. When it offers to disturb the deep habit and repose of nature—when instead of taking its place among the other concerns and affections of a disciple, it proceeds to subordinate them all—when instead of laying claim to a share of human life, it lays claim to the sovereignty over it—when

not satisfied with the occasional homage of its worshippers, it casts a superintending eye over their hearts, and their business, and their lives, and pronounces of every desire which is separate from the will and the glory of God, that it is tainted with the sin of idolatry,—when it thus proposes to search and to spiritualize, with the view of doing away all that is old, and of making every thing new, ancient Rome was never more in arms for her gods, than modern humanity is in arms for her obstinate habits, and her longing propensities. And yet if Christianity would tolerate nature, nature would in return tolerate Christianity. She would even offer to her the compromise of many hours and many services. She would build temples to her honour, and be present at all her sacraments. We behold an exhibition of this sort every day among the decent and orderly professors of our faith; and it is not till this antipathy be provoked by a full disclosure of the spirit and exactions of the gospel, that the whole extent of that antipathy is known.

We may expatiate on the social or civil virtues, such as justice, for example, without coming into collision with the antipathies of nature. Even worldliness herself may listen with an approving ear to the most rigid demonstration of this virtue. For though justice be a required offering at the shrine of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it may also be, and it often is, both a required and a rendered offering at the shrine of honour and interest. The truth is, that a man may have his heart fully set upon the world; and a portion on this side of time may be the object in which he rests, and upon

which all his desires do terminate; and yet he may not feel himself painfully thwarted at all by the demand of an honesty the most strict and inviolable. A compliance with this demand may not break up his other idolatries in the least. In the practice of a truth and an integrity as unlimited as any law of God can impose, may he be borne rejoicingly along on the full tide of prosperity; and by every new accession to his wealth, be multiplying the ties which fasten him to the world. There is many an intense votary of gain, who will bear to be told that he should be perfectly fair and upright in the prosecution of it, and who will not bear to be told, that the very intensity of this prosecution marks him out as a child of earthliness—makes it manifest, that he is striking all his roots into a perishable foundation—proves him to be the victim of a disease, the symptoms of which lie much deeper than in his external conduct—proves him, in short, to be unsound at heart, and that, with a principle of life, which will survive the dissolution of all that is visible, he, in strenuously labouring after its fancied interest, is fast heaping upon it the wretchedness of eternity. That morality which barely ventures to regulate the path that he is now walking towards the objects of this world's ambition, he will tolerate and applaud. But the morality which denounces the ambition, the morality which would root out the very feelings that hurry him onwards in the path; which bids him mortify his affections for all that this world has to offer; which tells him not to set his mind on any created thing, but to set his mind on the Creator, and to have nothing farther

to do with the world, than as a place of passage and preparation for an abode of blessedness in heaven,—the morality which tells him to cease his attachment from those things with which he has linked the ruling desires, and all the practical energies of his existence,—such morality as this, he will resist with as much strenuousness as he would do a process of annihilation. The murderer who offers to destroy his life will not be shrunk from in greater horror, or withstood in a firmer spirit of determination, than the moralist who would force from him the surrender of affections which seem to be interwoven with his very being, and the indulgence of which has conferred upon it all the felicities of which he has yet experienced it to be capable. A revolution so violent looks as repulsive as death to the natural man; and it is also represented under the image of death in the Scripture. To cease from the desire of the eye, is to him a change as revolting as to have the light of the eye extinguished. To cease from the desire of the flesh, is to crucify the flesh. To cease from the pride of life, is to renounce the life of nature altogether. In a word, to cease from the desire of the old man, is not to turn, but to destroy him. It is to have him buried with Christ in baptism. It is to have him planted together with Christ in the likeness of his death. It is not to impress a movement, but to inflict a mortification.

But there is another very general misapprehension of peculiar Christianity, as if it dispensed with service on the part of its disciples, as if it had set aside the old law of works, and thus super-

seded the necessity of working altogether, as if, in some way or other, it substituted a kind of lofty mysticism in the place of that plain obedience which is laid down for us by the ten commandments—sweeping away from its new dispensation the moralities and observances of the old one, and leaving nothing in their place but a kind of cabalistic orthodoxy known only to the initiated few, and with the formal profession of which they look mightily safe and mightily satisfied.

Now we cannot become acquainted with Christianity without perceiving, that after the transition has been made from the old economy to the new, there is a service. This transition is signified by images expressive of the total change that is made in our relations and circumstances, when we pass from Nature to the Gospel—as the dissolution of a first marriage, and the entrance upon a second—a dying and a coming alive again—a release from one master, even the law, who formerly had the dominion over us, and an engagement with another Master, even God, under whom we are to bring forth the fruit that is lovely and acceptable in His sight—all marking the very wide dissimilarity that there is between the two states, and that when we have crossed the line of separation between them, we have indeed got into another region, and breathe another atmosphere altogether from what we did formerly—and yet there continues to subsist a service, performed, no doubt, in a different spirit and in a different manner from what it was before, but still a service. And indeed it is quite manifest, from the apostolical writings, that the

life of a Christian is expected to be all in a glow with labour and exertion, and manifold activity—not spent in the indolence of mystic contemplation, but abounding in work, and work too persevered in with immoveable steadfastness, and emanating from a zeal that ever actuates and ever urges on to the performance of it. This is the habit of a disciple upon earth, and it would appear to be his habit even after he is transported into heaven: "There thy servants serve thee." So that whether we look to those years which are preparatory to our entering upon the inheritance of glory, or to the eternity in which the inheritance itself is enjoyed, still we find that under the economy of grace there is a busy, strenuous, and ever-doing service. It is not in fact by exemption from service, but by the new spirit and principle wherewith the service is actuated, that the economy of grace stands distinguished from the economy of the law. We are delivered from the law, not that we should be delivered from the service of obedience, but that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

The *first* remark that we offer, in the way of illustrating this distinction between the new and the old economy, is, that there is indeed a very different spirit between two men, one of whom works, and that most incessantly, from the love that he bears to the wages, and the other of whom works, and that just as incessantly, from the unconquerable taste and affection which he has for the work itself. It is conceivable that the servant of some lordly proprietor, is remunerated accord-

ing to the quantity of game which he fetches from the woods and the wastes of that ample domain over which he expatiates—and that, under the dominion of a thirst for lucre, from morning to night he gives himself up to the occupation of a hunter. But it is conceivable of another, that the romance, and adventure, and spirit-stirring hazard and variety of such a life, are enough to fasten him, and that most intently, throughout all the hours of the day, on the very same enterprise: and thus, with a perfect likeness in the outward habit, may there be in the habit and desire of the heart a total and entire dissimilarity. The service is the same, but the spirit of the service is widely dissimilar. And this may just hold as true of the commandments of a heavenly, as of an earthly master. The children of Israel looked to the decalogue that was graven upon tablets of stone, and they knew that on their observation of it depended their possession of the land of Canaan, the prosperity of their seasons, and the peace of their habitations from the inroad of desolating enemies. The love they bore to their inheritance, is love quite distinguishable from the love they bore to that task which formed the tenor upon which they held it—and it may just be as distinguishable in him who seeks to purchase, by his obedience, the heavenly Canaan set forth to us in the gospel, and who thinks of this Canaan as a place of splendour, and music, and physical gratifications; who looks onward in fancy to its groves and its palaces, or who, as it stands revealed in perspective before him, on the other side of death,

figures it at large as a place of general and boundless enjoyment, where pleasure ever circulates in tides of ecstasy, and at least there is a secure and everlasting escape from the horrors of the place of condemnation. A love for the work, and a love for the wages, are here two different affections altogether; and to reduce them to one, you must present heaven in its true character, as a place of constant and unwearied obedience. The Israelite toiling in drudgery at the work of his ordinances, and that for the purpose of retaining his pleasant home on this side of death—or the formal Christian walking the routine of his ordinances, and that for the purpose of reaching a pleasant home on the other side of death—either of them breathes a totally different spirit from the man who finds the work of obedience itself to be indeed a way of pleasantness and a path of delight to him—who, without the bidding of his master at all, would, at the bidding of his own heart, just move his hand as his master would have him to do—who is in his element when engaged in the work of the commandments, and to whose renovated taste and faculties of moral sensation, the atmosphere of righteousness is in itself the atmosphere of peace and joy.

The services of two men may thus externally be the same, and yet, the spirit that animates the one and the other may just be as different, as sordidness and sacredness are wide of one another. And a difference of spirit is every thing to Him with whom we have to do. He sits at the head of a moral empire; and affection, and motive, and design are mainly the things of which he takes

cognizance; and discerner of hearts as he is, it is the desire of the heart upon which he fastens his chief attention; and in his judgment it is indeed a question most decisive of character, whether this actuating desire be love to the work of righteousness, or only love to wages distinct from the work. To serve in the first of these ways, is to serve in the newness of the spirit. To serve in the second of them, is to serve in the oldness of the letter; and the substitution of the one for the other, is that great achievement which the gospel personally and substantially makes on every man who truly embraces it. It forms as essential a part of that covenant which God makes with the believer as does the forgiveness of sin. "This is the covenant, that I will put my law in his heart." When it only stood graven upon a table of stone, obedience was an affair of labour. But when the law is graven on the fleshly tablet of the heart, obedience is an affair of love. It is every thing to God whether His service be felt by us as the drudgery of a task, or as the delight of a congenial employment—whether we painfully toil while it is doing, and are glad when it is over—or are pleasantly carried along, through all the steps of it, as of a work that we rejoice in—whether it be our hope, that after the keeping of the commandments there will be a great reward, or it be our happy and present sensation, that in the keeping of the commandments there is a great reward. It is this which distinguishes the service of our heavenly from that of our earthly master. With the latter, after the work cometh the payment, and the doing

of the one is a distinct and separate thing from the enjoyment of the other. With the former, after the work done now, cometh more work; after the business of using aright a few talents, cometh the business of ruling and of managing aright many things; after the praises and the services of the church below, come the higher services, and more ecstatic praises, of the sanctuary above; after the uprightness and the piety of our present lives, cometh the busy obedience of that everlasting land, which is called the land of uprightness: and how totally different then must the newness of the spirit be from the oldness of the letter; when, as with the one, the work is gone through from the mere impulse of a subsequent reward, which selfishness may seize upon and appropriate to its own indulgence, so with the other, the work is gone through from the impulse of its own native charm on the heart and taste of the delighted labourer, who is happy in the service of God here, and whose brightest anticipation is, that he shall be translated into the capacity of serving him more constantly and perfectly hereafter!

But, *secondly*, to do the work, because of the love that we bear to the wage which our master gives us, is doing service in a spirit altogether different from that of doing the work because of the love that we bear to the master himself. The set and tendency of the heart are altogether distinct in the one case from what they are in the other. In the first way of it, the heart is set altogether upon its own gratification, and is under the entire dominion of selfishness. In the second

way of it, it is set upon the gratification of another. The two are as distinct, as is the spirit of him who labours with the reluctancy of a slave, from the spirit of him who labours with the devotedness of a generous and disinterested friend. Now this is a change in the style and spirit of our obedience, which it is the object of Christianity to accomplish. To serve God in the oldness of the letter, is to eke out by tale and by measure a certain quantity of work which we offer as an incense to his selfishness—and in return for which he deals forth upon us a certain amount of wages as a regale to our selfishness back again—with as little of heart all the while in such an exchange, as there is in the trafficking of mutual interest and mutual jealousy which take place at a market. There is no love between the parties—no generous delight in ministering the one to the satisfaction of the other—no pleasure in pleasing—no play of a reciprocal affection—no happiness felt from the single circumstance that happiness has been bestowed. If this be the character of our service under the law, there is surely room for a mighty amendment, or rather for a total revolution, of its spirit and principle under the gospel. Even had the law been rigidly kept on the side of man, and its stipulations been rigidly fulfilled on the part of God, there would still have been a coldness, and a distance, and a tone of demand, on the one side, and a certain fearfulness of diffidence and distrust on the other, under such an economy. But the fact is, that the law has not been kept; and the consciousness of this perpetually overhung the wretched

aspirant after a righteousness which he never could fulfil; and he felt himself haunted at every footstep of his exertions by the fear of a reckoning; still floundering however, while failing at every turn, and burdened in spirit by a heavy and enfeebling sense of despair. And that Being can never be regarded with joy, who is regarded with jealousy. It is impossible that terror and love can both exist in the same bosom towards the same God. It is not in sentient nature to feel affection towards one of whom we are afraid—and so long as the controversy of tasks undone, and accounts unpaid, remained unsettled, there was no getting at affection towards God. In these circumstances, the history of man might be covered all over with deeds of religiousness, but the heart of man is bound as to its desires and likings, with a spell that is utterly indissoluble. It is frozen out of all love, by the chilling influences of distrust, and terror, and guilty consciousness. He would fain propitiate God for the sake of his own security, but he is too much engrossed with himself to care about pleasing God for the mere sake of pleasing Him. Obedience on such a principle as this, appears to lie at an immeasurable distance from him; and if he does persevere in a sort of religious drudgery, done in bondage, and done in slavish apprehension, it is the obedience of one who serves in the oldness of the letter, but not in the newness of the spirit.

Now to effect a transformation in the spirit of our services was one great design of the gospel of Jesus Christ—not to abolish service, we should

remark, but to animate it with a new principle—not to set aside work, but to strike out a pure and copious fountain in the heart, from which it might emanate—to strike off those fetters by which the moral and sentient nature of man was linked, as to all affection for the Godhead, in a kind of dull and heavy imprisonment—and bid those feelings which had long been pent and stifled in imprisonment there, go freely forth, both with trust and with tenderness, to the Father from whom we had been so sadly alienated. For this purpose a Mediator was appointed, and the account now taken up and discharged by him, is no longer against us—and for our sins, we are told, if we would only give credit to the saying, we shall no more be reckoned with—and the Deity reveals Himself in a new aspect of invitation to His creatures, and just that He may awaken the new affections of confidence and love in their before fearful and suspicious bosoms. We cannot love God in the face of a debt uncancelled and of a sentence unrecalled, and of a threatening that is still in force against us, and of mighty and majestic attributes all leagued for their own vindication to the object of destroying us. But we can love God when we are told, and we believe what is told of the ransom that is paid, and of the sentence and the threatening being all already spent on the agonies of another's endurance, and of His attributes aroused to vengeance because of sin, now pacified because of a sacrifice—so that mercy is free to send forth her beseeching calls, and, emancipated from the claims of truth and justice, can now abundantly rejoice over all

the works and perfections of the Godhead. The cross of Jesus Christ is not merely the place of breaking forth into peace and reconciliation, but it is also the place of breaking forth into the love and new obedience of a regenerated nature. He who hath blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross—it is He who hath slain in our hearts their enmity against God—and now that we can love God because He first loved us, and sent His Son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins—now, and now only, can we serve Him in the newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

It should be our aim then to keep our hearts in the love of God—and this can only be done by keeping in memory the love that He hath borne unto us. With this affection all alive in our bosoms, and seeking how most to please and to gratify the Being whom it regards—let us never forget that this is His will, even our sanctification: that like as He rejoiced at the birth of nature, when, on the work being accomplished, He looked upon every thing that He had made, and saw in the beauty, and luxuriance, and variety, which had just emerged from His hands, that all was very good—in like manner, and much more, does He rejoice in that new creation, by which moral loveliness, and harmony, and order, are made to emerge out of the chaos of our present degeneracy. The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and the spectacle of our worth and excellence is to Him a pleasing spectacle—and what He wants is, to form

and to multiply, by the regenerative power of His Spirit, the specimens of a beauty far higher in kind than all that can be exhibited on the face of visible nature: and our truth and our charity, and our deep repentance for sin, and our ceaseless aspirations after loftier degrees of purity and godliness—these imprint so many additional features of gracefulness on that spiritual creation over which the holiness of His character most inclines Him to rejoice; and we knowing that this is the mind of the Deity, and loving to gratify the Being whom we love, are furnished with a principle of obedience, more generous, and far more productive of the fruits of righteousness, than the legal principle, which only seeks to be square with the Lawgiver, and safe from the thunders of His violated authority. There is no limitation to such an obedience. The ever-urging principle of love to God is sure at all times to stimulate and to extend it: and what with a sense of delight to the work itself, and with the sense that God whom we love delights in the work also and rejoices over it, is there a newness of spirit given to obedience under the economy of the gospel, altogether diverse from the oldness of the letter, which obtained under the economy of nature and of the law.

But, *thirdly*, there is nothing perhaps that will better illustrate the distinction between service rendered in the newness of the spirit, and service rendered in the oldness of the letter, than one simple reflection upon what that is which is the great object of the dispensation we sit under—to be made like unto God, like unto Him in righte-

ousness, and like unto Him in true holiness. Now just think what the righteousness of God is like. Is it righteousness in submission to the authority of a law? Is it righteousness painfully and laboriously wrought out, with a view to reward? Is it righteousness in pursuit of any one pleasure or gratification that is at all distinct from the pleasure which the Divinity has in the very righteousness itself? Does not He desire righteousness simply because He loves it? Is not He holy, just because holiness is the native and kindred element of His Being? Do not all the worth and all the moral excellence of the Godhead, come direct from the original tendencies of His own moral nature? And would either the dread of punishment or the hope of remuneration be necessary to attach Him more than He already is, by the spontaneous and unbidden propensities of His own character, to that virtue which has been His glory from everlasting, and to that ethereal purity in which He most delights to expatiate? It is not at the beck of a governor—it is not with a view to prepare Himself for an appearance at some bar of jurisprudence—it is nothing else in fact but the preference He bears for what is right, and the hatred He holds for what is wrong—it is this, and this alone, which determines to absolute and unerring rectitude all the purposes and all the proceedings of the Deity. And to be like unto Him, that which is a task when done under the oldness of the letter, must be done in newness of spirit, and then will it be the very transport of our nature to be engaged in the doing of it. What is now felt, we fear, by many as a

bondage, would, were we formed anew in the image of him who created us, become a blessedness. The burden of our existence would turn into its beatitude—and we, exempted from all those feelings of drudgery and dislike which ever accompany a mere literal obedience, would prosecute holiness with a sort of constitutional delight, and so evince that God was assimilating us to Himself, that He was dwelling in us, and that He was walking in us.

And the Christian disciple who is thus aspiring after that obedience, which while it fulfils the demands of the law in the letter, is also rendered in newness of spirit, will find in the following Treatise, "SCUDDER'S CHRISTIAN'S DAILY WALK IN HOLY SECURITY AND PEACE," a valuable companion and counsellor to guide him in every condition of life, and under all the vicissitudes to which life is subject—to instruct him how to prosecute his daily walk, so as to secure his peace, and to possess his soul in patience, in his journey through life, and to render the circumstances of his lot, whether prosperous or adverse, subservient to the still higher purpose of promoting his holiness and his growth in the divine life, to fit him for the heavenly rest which awaits him at the close of his earthly pilgrimage. In this Treatise, the Christian disciple will learn to combine a service the most rigid in the letter, with those principles of the renewed heart which render it at the same time a delightful and an acceptable service. He will learn how to walk with God, while engaged in the service of man. It is the production of a man who had reached to great attainments in the spiritual life,

and whose wise and experimental counsels are well fitted to guide him amidst the doubts and difficulties which may beset his path in the Christian warfare. It has received the approving testimony of two of the most eminent Divines of a former age, Dr Owen and Richard Baxter, and we know of no work which better merits the high commendation which these competent judges have bestowed on it.

But without expatiating on the excellencies of a work, the value of which can only be estimated by those who have devoted themselves to a serious perusal of its pages, we shall conclude with two inferences from the prefatory observations with which we have introduced this Treatise to the notice of our readers. The first is, that virtue, so far from being superseded by the gospel, is exalted thereby into a far nobler, and purer, and more disinterested attribute of the character than before. It becomes virtue, refined from that taint of sordidness which formerly adhered to it; prosecuted not from an impulse of selfishness, but from an impulse of generosity—followed after for its own sake, and because of the loveliness of its native and essential charms, instead of being followed after for the sake of that lucre wherewith it may be conceived to bribe and to enrich its votaries. Legal virtue is rendered in the spirit of a mercenary, who attaches himself to the work of obedience for hire. Evangelical virtue is rendered in the spirit of an amateur, who, in attaching himself to the work of obedience, finds that he is already in the midst of those very delights, than which he

cares for none other in time, and will care for none other through eternity. The man who slaves at the employment to escape the penalty or to secure the pay, is diametrically the reverse of that man who is still more intensely devoted to the employment than the other, but because he has devoted to it the taste and the affections of his renovated nature. There is a well of water struck out in his heart, which springeth up unto spiritual life here, and unto everlasting life hereafter. There is an angelic spirit which has descended upon him from above; and which likens him to those beings of celestial nature, who serve God, not from the authority of any law that is without, but from the impulse of a love that is within; whose whole heart is in the work of obedience, and whose happiness is without alloy, just because their holiness is without a failing and without a flaw. The gospel does not expunge virtue; it only elevates its character, and raises the virtue of earth on the same platform with the virtue of heaven. It causes it to be its own reward; and prefers the disciples of Jesus Christ from the condition of hirelings who serve in the spirit of bondage to the condition of heirs who serve their reconciled Father in the spirit of adoption; who love what He loves, and with a spirit kindred to His own, breathe in the atmosphere which best suits them, when they breathe in the atmosphere of holiness.

Our second inference is, that while the life of a Christian is a life of progressive virtue, and of virtue, too, purified from the jealousies and the sor-

didness of the legal spirit, still to be set on such a career, we see how indispensable it is that we enter by Christ, as by the alone gate of admission through which we can reach the way of such a sanctification. How else can we get rid of the oldness of the letter, we would ask? How be delivered from the fears and disquietudes of legality? How were it possible to regard God in any other light than one whose very sacredness made him the enemy of sinners, and so made him hateful to them? We are bound over to distrust, and alienation, and impracticable distance from God, till the tidings of the gospel set us free. There is a leaden and oppressive weight upon our spirits, under which there can be no play of free, or grateful, or generous emotion towards the Father of them, till we hear with effect of the peace-speaking blood, and of the charm and the power of the great propitiation. Faith in Christ is not merely the starting-post of our reconciliation with God; it is also the starting-post of that new obedience which, unchilled by jealousy, and untainted by dread or by selfishness, is the alone obedience that is at all acceptable. The heart cannot go freely out to God, while beset with terror, while combined with the thoughts of a yet unsettled controversy, while in full view of its own sinfulness, and still in the dark about the way in which a Being of unspotted purity and inflexible justice, can find out a right channel of conveyance for the dispensation of His mercy—how He can be just, while the Justifier of the ungodly. It is the cross of Christ that resolves all these painful ambiguities. It is this which dissipates all these appre-

heavens. It is this which maintains, in sanctity unviolated, the whole aspect and character of the Godhead; while there beameth forth from it the kindest expression of welcome even on the chief of sinners. Let that expression be but seen and understood, and then will that be to us a matter of experience which we have tried, and tried so feebly, to set forth as a matter of demonstration. Our bonds will be loosed. A thing of hopeless drudgery, will be turned into a thing of heart-felt delight. The breath of a new spirit will animate our doings; and we will personally, and by actual feeling, ascertain the difference that there is between the service of a Lawgiver pursuing us with exactions that we cannot reach, and the service of a Friend, who has already charmed us both into confidence and gratitude, and is cheering us on, through the manifold infirmities of our nature, to the resemblance of himself in all that is kind, and upright, and heavenly, and holy. It is only, we repeat it, through the knowledge of Christ and of him crucified, that we can effect this transition from the one style of obedience to the other style of obedience. It is only thus that we become dead unto the law, and alive unto God. It is only thus that we can serve him with all the energies of an emancipated heart, now set at large from that despondency and deadness which formerly congealed it. "I will run the way of thy commandments," says the Psalmist, "when thou hast enlarged my heart." Make room in it for the doctrine of the cross, and this will enlarge it. And, therefore, to sinners do we declare, that

Christ is set forth as a propitiation, and all who believe in him shall have the benefit; and to believers do we declare, that God hath called them not to uncleanness, but to holiness; that, naming the name of Christ, their distinct business is to depart from all iniquity, and to do the commandments, not because they can purchase admission to heaven by the doing of them, but because heaven is purchased for them already: and to be educated for heaven, they must learn to do what is right—not that they can earn a title upon God, but because God has been graciously pleased to confer this title upon them; and now it is their part to do what is "well-pleasing in his sight—walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing—being fruitful in every good work—and giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

TO

TRACTS

BY THE REV. THOMAS SCOTT,

RECTOR OF ASTON SANDFORD.

THERE is no delusion more prevalent, or more difficult to dissipate from the minds of men, than the imagined power which this world possesses, to confer solid good or substantial enjoyment on its votaries. Their life is one unceasing struggle for some object which lies at a distance from them. Their path upon earth is an attempted progress towards some attainment, which they conceive to be placed at an onward point in the line of their futurity. They are fighting their way to an arduous eminence of wealth or of distinction, or running with eager desire after some station of fancied delight, or fancied repose, on this side of death. And it is the part of religious wisdom, to mark the contrast which obtains between the activity of the pursuit in the ways of human business or human ambition, and the utter vanity of the termination —to compute the many chances of disappointment —and, even when the success has been most triumphant, to compare the vehemence of the longing expectation with the heartlessness of the

dull and empty acquirement—to observe how, in the career of restless and aspiring man, he is ever experiencing that to be tasteless, on which, while beyond his reach, he had lavished his fondest and most devoted energies. When we thus see that the life of man in the world is spent in vanity, and goes out in darkness, we may say of all the wayward children of humanity, that they run as uncertainly, and fight as one who beateth the air; or, to quote another Bible declaration, "Surely man walketh in a vain show, surely he vexeth himself in vain."

But these animadversions on that waste of strength and of exertion, which is incurred by the mere votaries of this world, are not applicable merely to the pursuits of general humanity, they are frequently no less applicable to our pursuits as Christians; and even with eternity as an object, there is a way of so running, and of so contending for it, as to make no advances towards it. A man may be walking actively with this view, and yet not be walking surely. A man may have entered into a strenuous combat for the rewards of immortality, and yet not obtain either the triumphs or the fruits of victory. There may be a great expense of movement, and of effort, and of diligence, and all for the good of his soul; and yet the expense be utterly unproductive of that for which his soul is anxiously putting forth the energies which belong to it. He may be walking on a way of toilsome exertion, and yet not be going on in his way rejoicing. A haunting sense of the vanity of all his labour, may darken and paralyze every footstep

of his attempted progress towards heaven, and make him utterly the reverse of that Christian who is steadfast, and immoveable, and always abounding. That man can never be satisfied with his own movements, who is not making sensible progress towards some assigned object of desire; and should that be a blissful eternity, there will adhere to him all the discomfort of running uncertainly, so long as he is not getting perceptibly nearer to the fulfilment of his wishes. It were lifting off the weight of a mountain from the heart of many a labouring inquirer, could he be set on a sure place, and a clear and ever brightening object be placed before him in the march of his practical Christianity—could such a distinct aim and bearing be assigned to him, as, with a full knowledge of the purpose of all his doings, and a hope of the purpose being accomplished, he might, in whatever he did, do it with cheerfulness and vigour—could he be made to understand whither his labours are tending, and for this end something precise, and definite, and intelligible, were at length to evolve itself out of the mists and the mazes of human controversy—could all the wranglings of disputation be hushed, and, amid the din of conflicting opinions about faith, and works, and the agency of man, and the sovereignty of God, an authoritative voice were heard to lift the overbearing utterance of, "This is the way, walk ye in it"—could he be rescued from the indecisions of those who are ever learning, and never able to arrive at the knowledge of the truth,—then, like Paul, might he both be strong in orthodoxy, and strong in the confidence and

consistency of his practical determinations. He would not be, what we fear many professing Christians are, at a loss how to turn themselves, and in the dire perplexity of those who labour without an object and without an end.

There are three different states of activity in the prosecution of our religious interests, to which we shall advert, all of which are exemplified in human experience; and we shall attempt to point out what is right and what is wrong in each of them.

The first state of activity is exemplified by those who seek to establish a righteousness of their own; the second by those who seek to be justified by faith; and the third by those who seek under Christ, as the accepted Mediator, to attain that holiness without which no man can see God—to reach that character, without which there is no congeniality with the joys or the exercises of heaven.

I. In the New Testament, the Jews are charged with a prevailing disposition to establish a righteousness of their own, but this formed no local or national peculiarity on the part of the Jewish people. It is the universal disposition of nature, and is as plainly and prominently exemplified among professing Christians of the day, as it ever was by the most zealous adherents of the Mosaic ritual. It is true, that out of the multitude of its ceremonial observations, a goodly frame-work could be reared of outward and apparent conformities to the will of God; and nothing more natural than for man to enter into that which is the work of his own hands, and then to feel himself as if placed in a tabernacle of security. But there are other materials besides

those of Judaism, which men can employ for raising a fabric of self-righteousness. Some of them as formal in their character as the Sabbaths and the Sacraments of Christianity—others of them with the claim of being more substantial in their character, as the relative duties and proprieties of life,—but all of them proceeding on the same presumption, that man can, by his own powers, work out a meritorious title to acceptance with God, and that he can so equalize his doings with the demands of the law, as to make it incumbent on the Lawgiver to confer on him the rewards and the favour which are due to obedience.

Now it is worthy of remark, that though few are prepared to assert this principle in all its extent, and though it even be disowned by them in profession, yet in practice and in feeling it adheres to them. To the question, What shall I do to be saved? it is the silent answer of many a heart, That there is something which I can do, and by the doing of which I can achieve my salvation. A sense of his own sufficiency lurks in the bosom of man, long after, by his lips, he has denied it; and it is a very possible thing to be most steadfast in the arguments, and most strenuous in the asseverations of orthodoxy, and yet practically to be so undisciplined by its lessons, as that the habit of the whole man shall be in a state of real and effective resistance to them.

And thus it is, that, among the men of all creeds, and of all professions in Christianity, do we meet with the attempt of establishing a righteousness of their own. The question of our interest with God

is no sooner entertained by the human mind, than it appears to be one of the readiest and most natural of its movements to do something for the object of working out such a righteousness. The question of, How shall I, from being personally a condemned sinner, become personally an approved and accepted servant of God? no sooner enters the mind, than it is followed up by the suggestion of such a personal change in habit or in character, as it is competent for man, by his own turning and his own striving, to accomplish. The power of which I am conscious—the command with which I feel myself invested over both my thoughts and my doings—the authoritative voice which the mind can issue from the place of fancied sovereignty where it sits, and from which it exacts both of the outer and the inner man an obedience to all its inclinations,—these are what I constantly and familiarly press into my service; and I find that, in point of fact, they are able to conduct me to many a practical attainment. Nor is it to be wondered at, that when the attainment in question is such a righteousness before God as may empower me to lift a plea of desert in his hearing, the presumption should still adhere to me, that this also I can achieve by my own strength—this also I shall win as the fruit of my own energies, and my own aspirations.

Now, what stamps an utter hopelessness upon such an enterprise as this, is both the actual deficiency of every man's conduct from the requirements of God's law, throughout that part of his history which is past, and the deficiency, no less

obvious, of every man's powers from a full and equal obedience to the same requirements, during that part of his history which is to come. Without entering into the abstract question of justice, whether the rigour of a man's future conformities should make up for the offence of his bygone disobedience, and deciding this question by the light of nature or of conscience, certain it is, that no man, under the revelation of the Gospel, can feel himself, even though he were on a most prosperous career of advancing virtue, to be in a state of ease in the sense of the guilt that has already been incurred, and of the transgressions which have already been committed by him. On this subject, there are certain texts of the Bible which look hard upon him—certain solemn announcements about the immutability of the law, which cannot fail to disturb, and, it may be, to paralyze him—certain damnatory clauses about the very least act of iniquity, on which he, conscious of great and repeated acts of iniquity, may well conclude himself to be a lost and irrecoverable sinner—certain mighty asseverations, on the part of God's own Son, about the difficulty of annulling the sanctions of his Father's government, and that it were easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for these to pass away, which may well fill the heart of every conscious offender with the assurance, that his condemnation is as unfailing as the truth of God, and greatly more unfailing than are the present ordinances of creation. These both tell the enlightened sinner that his case is beyond the remedy even of his most powerful exertions; and they also make

exertions which, in the spirit of hope and of confidence, might have been powerful, weak as childhood, by the overwhelming influence of despair. The man feels that the sentence which is already past, lays the weight of an immoveable interdict upon all his energies. His interest with God looks to be irrecoverable, and any attempt to recover it is like the frantic exertions of a captive raving in despair around the unpracticable walls of the dungeon which holds him. While the handwriting of ordinances is still against him, and not taken out of the way, it looks to him like the flaming sword at the gate of Paradise, forbidding his every attempt to force the barrier of that blissful habitation. The man is in a state of spiritual imprisonment, and he feels himself to be so. The menacing urgencies of the law may put him into a kind of convulsive activity, while the unrelenting severity of the law leaves him not one particle of hope to gladden or to inspire it. Thus he runs without an object, and struggles without even the anticipation of success.

The thing which makes the remembrance of the past shed a blight so withering and so destructive over the attempted obedience of the future, is, that we cannot admit the truth of the matter into our understanding, without admitting, at the same time, into our hearts, an apprehension which instantly stifles, or puts to flight the alone principle of all acceptable obedience. The truth of the matter is, that the promulgations of the law cannot be surrendered, without a surrender of the attributes of God, and thus it is, that with every man who

thinks truly, the consciousness of being a sinner, brings along with it the fear of God as an avenger. And it is impossible for sentient nature to love the Being whom it so fears. It is impossible, at one and the same time, to have a dread of God, and a delight in God. There may be love up to the height of seraphic ecstasy, where there is the fear of reverence, but there is no love in any one of its modifications, where there is the fear of terror. Let God appear before the eye of our imagination, in the light of a strong man, armed to destroy us, and if the only obedience which our heart can render be love, then is our heart put, by such an exhibition of the Deity, into a state of rebellion. There may be physical, but there is no moral obedience. The feet may be made to run, and the hands to move, and the tongue to speak, or to be silent, and the whole organization of the body may be squared into a rigorous adjustment, with a set of outward and literal conformities, and yet the soul which animates that organization, be all in a fester with its known delinquencies against the law, and its dark suspicious antipathies against the Lawgiver. And thus it is, that let the present moment be the point of our purposed reformation, not only may God charge us with the unexpiated guilt of all that goes before it, but, if we have a just and enlightened retrospect of what we were, and an equally just and enlightened conception of Him with whom we have to do, there will be a taint of substantial worthlessness in all that comes after it. That which stands so strong a bar in the way of reconciliation, will just stand equally strong as a bar in the way

of repentance. The sense of God's hostility to us, will so provoke our fear and our hostility towards Him, as to haunt, and utterly to vitiate the whole character of our proposed and attempted obedience. When the body, worn out by the drudgery of its painful and reluctant observations, shall resign its ascending spirit to Him who sitteth on the throne, he will not recognize upon it one lineament of that generous and confiding affection, which gives all its worth to the love and the loyalty of paradise. He will not discern one mark of preparation for an inheritance in heaven, upon him who on earth made many a weary struggle to attain it.

There are, it must be admitted, many who do not think truly of the law; and who, not aware of its lofty demands, think they do enough, when they maintain a complacent round of seemly, but at the same time most inadequate observations—among whom all is formality without, and all is repose and settledness within—who pace, with unwearied step, the circle of ordinances, and are just as regular in their attendance, as is the bell which summons them to the house of prayer—who would feel discomfort out of their routine, but have the most placid and immoveable security within it—and who, amid the engrossment of their many punctualities, have never thought of admitting into their bosoms one fear, or one feeling, that can at all disturb them. These are running uncertainly; but they are not harassed by any sense or suspicion of it. They are only beating the air; but they are not fatigued by the consciousness of its being a fruitless operation. They are in a state of repose;

but it is the repose of death. They have accommodated their conduct to the established decencies of the world; but the spirit of the world has never quitted its hold of them. Their portion is on this side of the grave—their delights are on this side of the grave—their all is on this side of the grave. They go to church, and they sit down to the sacrament, and they maintain within their houses a style of Sabbath observation; but these are merely habits appended to the mechanical, and not to the moral or spiritual part of their constitution. They may do all this, and be strangers to the life of faith, to the exercise of devout affection, to the habit of communion with God, as the living God; to all those processes, in short, which mark and carry forward the transformation of the soul, from its congeniality with the elements of nature and of sense, to its congeniality with the elements of spirit and of eternity. There may be a work of drudgery with the hands, and with the doing of which, too, they are pleased and satisfied, while there is no work of grace upon the heart. The outer man may be in a state of incessant bodily exercise. The inner man may be in a state of entire stagnancy. They do, in fact, run uncertainly. They do, in fact, fight as he who beateth the air. But they have no fear of coming short—no feeling to embitter the course of their religious activity; and without the wakefulness of any alarm upon the subject, do they so contend as to lose the mastery, do they so run as that they shall not obtain.

Now this is not the class that we have chiefly had in our eye. The men to whom we principally allude, are those who run, but without hope, and

without satisfaction—men who fight, but without any cheering anticipations of victory. They are seeking a righteousness by works; and are, at the same time, disheartened, at every step, by the consciousness of no sensible advancement towards it. Unlike the latter, they think more truly and more adequately of the law. The one class see it only in the light of a carnal commandment. The others see it according to the character of its spiritual requirements. The one, without an enlightened sense of the law, are what the apostle represents himself to have been when without the law, alive; even like all those religious formalists, who look forward to eternal life on the strength of their manifold and religious observations. The others, with this enlightened sense, are what the apostle represents himself to have been after the law came, dead; or they feel all the helplessness of death and of despair, even as he did, when, amid his strenuous but unavailing struggles, he was forced to exclaim, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" And thus it is, we believe, with many whose hearts have at length been struck by a sense of the importance of eternal things—who have begun to feel the weight of their everlasting interests—who are sensible that all is not right about them, and are seeking about for that movement of transition, by which they may be carried forward from a state of wrath to a state of acceptance—who, in obedience to the first natural impulse, strive to amend what is wrong in conduct, and to adopt what is right in conduct, but find, that after all their toil, and all their careful-

ness, that relief is as far from them as ever—who set up a new order in their lives, and propose to find their way to peace on the stepping-stones of many and successive reformations, but find, that as they pile their offerings of obedience the one upon the other, the law rises in its exactions; and what with a claim of satisfaction for the past, and of spiritual obedience for the future, it exhibits itself to their appalled imaginations, in the dimensions of such a length, and a breadth, and a height, and a depth, as they never can encircle—who, in the very proportion, it may be, of their pains and their earnestness, are ever acquiring more tremendous conceptions, both of the extent of its requisitions, and the terrors of its authority—who thus feel, that by every trial of obedience, they are just multiplying their failures, and swelling the account of guilt and of deficiency that is against them—who feel themselves in the hopeless condition of men, whose every attempt at extrication, just thickens the entanglements that are around them, and whose every effort of activity fastens them the deeper in an abyss of helplessness. This is the real process, we will not say of all, but of many a convert to the light and power of the gospel. This is the sure result with every man who seeks to establish a righteousness of his own, if, along with this attempt, he combines an adequate conception of the law in the spirituality of its demands, of the law in the certainty of its exactions. He feels urged, on the one hand, by its menacing and authoritative voice, to do. He feels convicted, on the other, by a sense of the guilt or

inadequacy which attaches to all his doing. He feels himself in the hand of a master issuing an impracticable mandate, and lifting at the same time an arm of powerful displeasure, for all his past and all his present violations. He cannot sit still under the power and frequency of the applications which are now making to his awakened conscience. He flies for deliverance, but it is like the flight of a desperado from his sure and unrelenting pursuers.

In the olden books of Scotland, and in that traditional history, which is handed down from the pious of one generation to another, we meet with this very process not unaptly described under the term of law-work. It is well delineated in the lives of Brainerd and Halyburton. There is an intermediate period of darkness, and despondency, and distress, in many an individual history, between the repose of nature's indifference, and the repose of gospel peace and gospel anticipations. The mind, in these circumstances, is generally alive to two distinct things: first, to the truth and immutable obligation of God's law; and, secondly, to the magnitude and irrecoverable evil of its own actual deficiencies. It is at one time urged on by an impulse of natural conscience, to a set of active measures for the recovery of its lost condition. It is at another time mortified into a despairing sense, that all these measures are utterly fruitless and unavailing. And thus, amid the agitations of doubt, and terror, and remorse; and sinking under the weight of an oppressive gloom, which is ever deepening, and ever aggravating around it, is it at length practically and experimentally convinced,

by many a weary but unsuccessful struggle, that in itself there is no strength, that the man who runs upon his own energies, runs uncertainly; and that he who fights with his own weapons, fights as one that beateth the air.

II. Having tried to seek a righteousness by works, and having failed, the next trial of many an inquirer after peace, is, to seek a righteousness by faith. And here we cannot but advert to the prejudice of the general world against the doctrine of acceptance through faith, as if it were a doctrine most loved, and most resorted to, by those who felt no value for the worth of moral accomplishments, and bestowed no labour on the cultivation of them. We beg the attention of our readers to the contrast which obtains between a very prevailing fancy upon this subject, and the fact, as it stands experimentally before us. The fancy is, that those who disclaim a justification by works, are those who take the least pains in the doing of them. The fact is, that it was by their very pains to be perfect and complete in the doing of them, that they found this foundation to be impracticable; and, now that they are upon another foundation, it is unto them, and not unto others, that we look for works in their greatest abundance, for works in their greatest purity. The fancy is, that, by linking their whole security, not with the rewards of obedience, but with the grace of the gospel, these people have given up all business with the law. The fact is, that, ever since they thought of religion at all, they have been by far the busiest of all their fellows about the requisitions of the law. It was their

schoolmaster, to bring them unto Christ; and now that they are so brought, the keeping of the law forms their daily and delightful occupation. It may well rank as one of the curiosities of our nature, that they who are most hostile to the doctrine of the efficacy of faith, because they think that works of themselves are sufficient for salvation, are, in the real and practical habit of their lives, most negligent in the performance of them; and, on the other hand, that they who are most hostile to the doctrine of the efficacy of works, because they think that it is by the power of faith that we are kept unto salvation, are the men who have most to show of those very works on which they seem to stamp so slight an estimation. And, to complete this apparent mystery, they who impute nothing but licentiousness to orthodoxy, tolerate licentiousness only in those who are the enemies, and never in those who are the professors of it—look upon the alliance between vice and evangelical sentiment to be a far more monstrous and unlikely alliance than that which often obtains between vice and an irreligious contempt for all the peculiarities of our faith—reproach the doctrine of the gospel for its immoral tendencies, and yet, for every flaw in the morality of its disciples, will they lift the reproachful cry of their lives and their opinions being in a state of disgraceful and hypocritical variance with each other: proving, after all, that the men who build their security most upon faith, are the men to whom even the world looks for most in the way of practical righteousness; are the men whose delinquencies are ever sure to raise the loudest murmurs of wrath

or of astonishment from by-standers; are the men over whom satire feels herself to have the greatest advantage, when, by any peccadillo of conduct, they furnish her with a topic, either of merriment or severity. And what else can we make of all these inconsistencies, than that there is a deep and prevailing misconception about the real character of the evangelical system? and that, while there has been imputed to it a cold and repulsive aspect towards virtue, there lies veiled under this a powerful and a working principle, from which even the public at large expect a more abundant return than they do from any other quarter of human society, of all the graces and all the accomplishments of virtue?

There is a change in the direction of our mind, when, from the object of being justified by works, it turns itself to the new object of being justified by faith. It is then only that it puts itself in quest of the only justification which is possible; and yet, when thus employed, there is still a way of running uncertainly. For, first, as virtue is a thing which attaches personally to him who performs it, so is faith a thing which attaches personally to him who possesses it. The one has just as local a residence within the mind, as the other. To have kind affection, and to have it not, argues a difference in the state of one's heart; and to have faith, or to have it not, argues, just as effectually, a difference in the state of one's understanding. To believe, is to do that which we ought. To disbelieve, is to do that which we ought not. And further, we are expressly told in the gospel, that,

with the right thing about us, there is linked our inheritance in heaven; and, with the wrong thing about us, there is linked our everlasting consignment to hell.—Here then is faith, like virtue, a personal acquirement; the possession of which is a right thing, and the want of which is a wrong thing. With such a statement before us, there is nothing more natural, than that we should look upon faith as standing in the same place, under the dispensation of the gospel, that obedience did, under the dispensation of the Law; that we should set about the acquirement of the one, very much in the way in which we set about the acquirement of the other; that we should put ourselves to work with the terms of the new covenant, just as we had been in the habit of working with the terms of the old covenant; strive to render our half of the bargain, which is faith, and then look to God for His half of the bargain, which is our final and everlasting salvation.

Under the economy of "Do this and live," the great point of anxiety with him who is labouring for the good of his soul, is, "O that I had obedience!" Under the economy of "Believe, and ye shall be saved," the great point of anxiety with him who is labouring for the good of his soul, is, "O that I had faith!" There is, in both cases, an earnestness, and perhaps a striving after the acquirement of a certain property of character. The only difference between the two cases, lies in the kind of property. But, just as the mind may put forth a strenuousness in its attempt to realize the grace of temperance, or in its attempt to realize the grace

of patience; so may the mind put forth a strenuousness in its attempt to realize the grace of faith; and, with the success of this endeavour, may it connect the prize of a happy eternity, and be virtually in the same attitude of labouring to substantiate a claim under the gospel, as it formerly was under the law. So that, in fact, the old legal spirit may be as fully at work with the new requirements, as ever it was with the old ones. The prospect of bliss may still be made to turn as much as before upon a performance. The only change is in the terms of the performance. But, in point of fact, men may make a work of faith. They may offer it to heaven, as their part of a new contract into which God has entered with the guilty. Faith and reward may stand related to each other, as the corresponding terms of a stipulation, in the same way that obedience and reward did. The favour of God, instead of being seen as a gift held out for our acceptance, may still be seen as a thing to be gained by a mental work, done with the putting forth of mental energies. In the doing of this work, there may be felt all the darkness, and all the anxiety, and all the spirit of bondage, which attached to the work of the old covenant. And thus it is, that there are many, with the doctrine of the gospel in their minds, and the phraseology of the gospel on their lips, upon whom the grace of the gospel is utterly thrown away, and who, as if still goaded on by the threats and exactions of the law, continue to run as uncertainly, and to fight even as one who beateth the air.

Now, it is evident, that in this way the gospel

may be so misconceived, as to have no right or appropriate influence whatever on the mind of an inquirer. If salvation, instead of being looked to, as by grace through faith, be looked to, as by faith, in the light of a rendered condition on the part of man, upon which he may challenge a certain stipulated fulfilment on the part of God,—then, all the distance, and suspicion, and unsatisfied longings, by which he felt himself to be harassed and enfeebled, when attempting to work and to win under the old economy, may still attend him, as he tries to work and to win, under the new. With his mind thus unfortunately set, he may still regard God in the light of a jealous exactor, and himself in the light of a lacking tributary. He may still be looking to the condition of his faith, and trembling at the defects of it; just as, before he attended to the gospel, he looked to the condition of his obedience, and trembled at the defects of it. It may still, in his eye, retain the whole spirit and character of a negotiation between two parties; and all the uncertainty of whether with him, as one of these parties, there has been a failure or a fulfilment, may still adhere, to agitate and to disturb him. At this rate, the gospel ceases, in fact, to be gospel. It loses its character in his eye, as a dispensation of mercy. The exhibition it offers, is not that of God holding out a benefit, in the shape of a gift, for our acceptance; but of God holding out a benefit, in the shape of a return for our faith. So that, ere we can look with a sentiment of hopeful confidence towards him, we must first look with a feeling of satisfaction to ourselves.

Now, this is not the way in other cases of a gift. Should a friend come into my presence with some dispensation of kindness, it is enough to put the whole joy of it into my heart, that I hear his assurances of good-will, that I behold his countenance of benignity, and that I see the offered boon held out to me for acceptance. It is true, that I would neither feel the charm of all this liberality, nor attempt to lay hold of what it offers, unless I gave credit to the offerer. But then, I am not thinking of this credit. I am not perplexing myself with any question about its reality. I am not first looking to myself, that I may see whether the belief is there—and then looking to the giver, that I may stretch forth a receiving hand to the fruit of his generosity. I am looking all the while to that which is without me; and it is from that which is without me, that all the influences of hope and of gratitude, and the pleasure of a felt deliverance from poverty, descend upon my soul. It is very true, that, unless I gave credit to my visiter, nothing of all this would be felt; and I may even carry my unbelief so far as to think that the offer was intended, not to relieve, but to affront me; and that, were I extending my hand to receive it, it would instantly be drawn back again in derision, by my insulting acquaintance. So that, without faith, I cannot obtain the benefit in question. But it is not to faith as an article in the agreement—it is not to faith as a meritorious service—it is not to faith as the term of a bargain, that the benefit is rendered. Faith acts no other part in this matter, than the mere opening of the

hand does in the matter of putting into it a sum of money. It does not affect the character of the gospel, as being a pure matter of giving on the one side, and of receiving on the other. And it is when we look to God in the light of a Giver—it is when we look to Him holding out a present, and beseeching our acceptance—it is when we look to Him setting forth Christ to the world as a propitiation for sin, and setting Him forth as effectually to us, as if there were no other sinner in the world but ourselves—it is when the outgoings of the mind's regard are thus turned towards the God who is above us, and the promises and declarations which are without us—and not when the mind is looking anxiously inward upon the operations of its own principles—it is then, and only then, that the sinner is in the attitude of a likely subject for the gospel, and for the reception of all its influences.

It has been well observed, that the mind is often put into disquietude, by looking to the act of faith, when it might derive to itself peace, and comfort, and joy, by looking to the object of faith. In the latter case, one turns to the mercy of God in Christ freely held out to him; in the former case, he turns his eye towards one of his own mental operations. While doing the one, a pure and unclouded hilarity might emanate upon the heart, from the countenance of the all-perfect Creator;—while doing the other, this light is but reflected back again in dimness and deficiency, from the work of a sinful and imperfect creature. The one is like taking in from the sun in the firmament a flood of

direct and unmitigated splendour; the other is like taking in a sullied and confused image of him, thrown back on the spectator from the surface of a foul and troubled water. Let him see God just in the way in which God is soliciting the notice of the guilty towards Him—let him look unto Christ, even as Christ is actually set forth to the view of the world—let him direct his upward gaze to that spiritual canopy of light and of truth which is above him—and, from these, through the medium of faith, there will descend upon his soul, that which can clear, and elevate, and transform it. But instead of so looking, and so sending forth the eye of his contemplation, let him turn it with minute and microscopic search towards this medium—let his attention be pointed inwardly, towards the nature and quality of his faith, and the danger is, that he loses sight of the very things which furnish faith with the only materials for its exercise. He may seek in vain for the operation of faith, and that, just because the objects of faith are withdrawn from it. He may seek with much labour and anxiety for what he cannot find, because, when the things to be looked for have taken their departure from the mind's eye, the exercise of looking has ceased. Instead of the outgoings of his belief being towards the beseeching God, and the dying Saviour, and all the evidences and expressions of good-will to men, with which the doctrine of man's redemption is associated, he has bent an anxious examination towards the state of that condition in which he conceives the offered mercy of the gospel to turn; and amid his doubts of its existence, or

his doubts of its entireness, does he remain without comfort and without satisfaction about his eternity.

It is true, that without faith the mind is in darkness. But faith enlightens a dark mind, only in the sense, in which an open window enlightens a before darkened chamber. It is not the window which enlightens the room. It is the sun which enlightens it. And should we, sitting in our chamber, be given to understand that a sight of the sun carries some delight or privilege along with it, it is not to the window that we look, but to the sun and through the window that we look. And the same of looking to Jesus. While so doing, our direct employment is to consider Him—to think of the truth and the grace that are stamped upon His character—to hear His promises, and to witness the honesty and the good-will which accompany the utterance of them—to dwell on the power of his death, and on the unquestionable pledge which it affords, that upon the business of our redemption He is in good earnest—to cast our regard on His unchangeable priesthood, and see, that by standing between God and the guilty, He has opened a way by which the approach of the most worthless of us all have been consecrated and rendered acceptable. It is by the direct beaming of light upon the soul, from such truths and such objects as these, that the soul passes out from its old state into a new state that is marvellous. Any thing that can arrest or avert the eye of contemplation away from them, is like the passing of a cloud over the great luminary of all our comfort, and our spiritual manifestation. If, instead of looking to the object that is without

us, from which the light proceedeth, we look only to the organ within us, through which the light passeth; we, while so employed, are as little looking unto Jesus, as he is looking to the sun in the firmament, all whose powers are absorbed in examining the composition of the glass of his window, or the anatomical construction of his eye. The songs, and the offers of deliverance, are altogether unheeded by him who is profoundly intent, at the time, on the phenomena of hearing. The beauties of the surrounding landscape may scarcely be perceived, or, at least, not be relished and admired by the observer, so long as all his faculties are busily engaged with an optical demonstration. And the proclamations of gospel mercy are equally unheard, and its aspect of glad and generous invitation is equally disregarded by him, who, ruminating on the mysteries of his own heart, perplexes himself among the depths and the difficulties of faith.

It is known to anatomists, that to have a view of the objects of surrounding nature, the image of all that is visible must be drawn out on the retina of the eye. But the peasant, who knows not that he has a retina, has just as vivid a perception of these objects, as the philosopher had, who first discovered the existence of it. And, in like manner, a babe in Christ might have a lively manifestation of the Saviour, who knows nothing of the metaphysics of faith—who is in utter darkness about all the controversies to which it has given birth—who sees with his mental eye, while in the profoundest ignorance about the construction of his mental eye—who cannot dive into the recesses of his own intellectual

constitution, but, by the working of that constitution, has caught a spiritual discernment of him, whom to see and to know is life everlasting.—"Father, I thank thee, that whilst thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent, thou hast revealed them unto babes."

There is not a readier way of running uncertainly, than strenuously to put forth effort in a matter over which the will has no control: and this is often done by those, who, in their anxious desire to get that faith on which salvation is made to turn, try, with all their might and all their diligence, to believe. Now this is what we never can do separately from evidence. To carry the conviction of the understanding, without proof addressed to the understanding, is impossible. If we are out of the way of meeting with the evidence of the truth, we never will attain a belief of the truth. It is no doubt possible, by the mere dint of mental exertion, to conceive what a doctrine is, and to retain that doctrine in our mind, and to recall it when it happens to be away from us: but it is not possible, without a satisfying evidence of the doctrine, actually to believe in it. Here then is a way in which we may incur the expense of effort, and the effort be altogether unavailing. We may be trying to believe, while we are looking the wrong way for it. It is not merely by poring over the lineaments of our own heart—it is not by witnessing the deficiencies of our faith, and still looking, and continuing to look to the place of these deficiencies —it is not by the reflection of evidences from within, while every avenue is closed of communication

from without, that light first arises in the midst of darkness. To obtain any such reflection, a beam of manifestation must be admitted from without, making it the entrance of the word of God which gives light unto us and the Spirit of God shining upon His testimony, which causes the demonstration of it to come with power, and with assurance, upon him who is giving earnest heed to the word of that testimony. So that, on the other hand, there is a way in which the will may be rightly and profitably employed in the matters of believing. There is a way in which the advice, of try to believe, is applicable, and may be successfully carried into effect. It is by our will that we open the pages of the Bible. It is by our will that we stir up our minds to lay hold of Him who speaketh there. It is by our will that we fulfil His own precept of hearkening diligently. It is by our will that we keep ourselves at the assigned post of meeting between us and the Holy Ghost; and, as the apostles did before us, wait for His coming with supplication and prayer. But it is in the act of attending to the word which is without us, that light finds access to our heart. If ever it fall upon us at all, this is the way in which it will come; and, if we are not widely mistaken, we utter an advice which is applicable to the case of at least some dark and disconsolate inquirers, when we say, that instead of fetching their peace and their joy in believing primarily from themselves, they should fetch it from the truths which are without them, and from the great Fountain of Truth and of Grace that is above

them. Acquaint thyself with thy Creator, and be at peace, and go unto Christ, all ye who labour and are heavy laden and He will give you rest.

Thus will we find the righteousness that we are in quest of. Thus will we meet a plea of acceptance already made out for us, and be given to perceive that the only obedience in which God can consistently with the honours of His government admit us into His favour, is an obedience which has been already rendered. If we commit ourselves to this with a perfect feeling of security, as the ground of our dependence, it will never never give way under us. He who trusteth in Christ shall never be confounded or put to shame. The righteousness which we vainly strive to make out in our own person, is worthless as pollution itself, when put by the side of that righteousness which has been already made out in the person of another; a righteousness, all the claims of which, and all the rewards of which, are offered to us; a righteousness, which, if we will only humble ourselves to put on, shall translate us into instant reconciliation with God, and, at length, exalt us to a place of unfading glory. Look then unto Jesus. Consider him who is the Apostle and the High Priest of our profession. We should cast our open and immediate regard upon Him who is evidently set forth crucified before us. And as it was in the act not of looking to their wounds, but in the act of looking to the brazen serpent, that the children of Israel were healed, even so is the Son of man lifted up, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

III. We have already attempted to prove, that the man who seeketh a righteousness by works, seeks it in a way which must land him in vanity and disappointment, and that he alone has attained the position with which he may take up and be satisfied, who has found the righteousness that is by faith. He alone who has accepted of the gospel offer, and puts his trust in its faithfulness, knows what it is to set himself down under a secure and unfailing canopy; and to delight himself greatly with the abundance of peace which he there enjoys. It cannot be adequately conceived by those who have never felt it; and therefore it is, that when a man looks to the offer of that righteousness which is unto all, and upon all who believe, as addressed to himself,—and when, treating it accordingly, he makes it the subject of his actual acceptance, along with the faith which has taken possession of him,—then enters the peace of God in Christ Jesus, which passes all understanding. When, weaned from every other dependence, he has at length learned to leave the whole weight both of his plea and of his expectation upon the Saviour, it is not easy to form an adequate thought of the change which then takes place upon his condition; how, by so doing, the whole deadness and heaviness of his soul are cleared away; how, as if loosed from a confinement in which it hath lain past from infancy, it breaks out into free and fearless intercourse with that God before whom it trembled; or away from whom all its thoughts and all its desires lay hid in carnal insensibility. They who never felt of faith in any other way than as a mere unmeaning or

cabalistic utterance, and are strangers to the term as fixed and substantiated in experimental reality, on a positive operation of the soul, perceive not the magnitude nor the glory of that transition which it causeth the soul to undergo. They know not the import of being made alive thereby unto God. But there are some who, though destitute in fact of this faith, may have some obscure fancy of what the effect must be, when the Being, with whom all power and all immensity stand associated, enters into a new relation with one of his own creatures, altogether opposite to that in which he stood before; and, instead of an enemy whom one fears, or a master whom one dislikes, or a dark and distant personage, from whom one has lived all his days in utter estrangement, he draws near to the eye of the inner man in the living character of a friend, and admits us into the number of his children, through the faith that is in Christ Jesus, and pours the spirit of adoption upon us. So that, unburdened of guilt and of suspicion, we may come unto God with full assurance of heart, as we would do to a reconciled father. When such terms as these, from being felt as sounds of mystery, come to be embodied in actual fulfilment, and to be invested with the meaning of felt and present realities; then does the inquirer find within himself, that to become a partaker of the faith of the New Testament, is indeed to pass out of darkness into a light that is marvellous. The one and simple circumstance of being now able to go out and in with confidence unto God, opens the door of his prison-house, and sets him at liberty. And let

us not wonder, that, with the new hope which is thus made to dawn upon his heart, a new feeling enters along with it, and a new affection now comes to inspire it. Who can say, in short, that the entrance of the faith of the gospel is not the turning point of a new character, that that is not the moment of all old things being done away, from which the man began to breathe in another moral atmosphere, and to conceive purposes, and to adopt practices, suited to another field of contemplation now placed before him. And thus, by the single act of believing—by giving credit to the word of God's testimony, when he holds himself forth to us as God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, and not imputing unto them their trespasses, —by conceiving of Christ, that He gives an honest account of the errand on which He came, when He says, that He "came not to condemn the world, but to save it,"—by conceding the honour of truth to Him who is the Author of the Bible, and so believing just as it is there spoken,—a course is set into operation, competent to the effect of an entire revolution, both in the prospect and in the moral state of him who is influenced by it,—translating him from a state of darkness, or a state of dismay, to peace, and joy, and spiritual life,—impressing a new character upon his heart, and turning into a new course of joy the whole of his habits and of his history.

Now, it is in the prosecution of this course—a course not of legal, but of evangelical obedience—a course in which, instead of winning the favour of God as the result of it, we are upheld by the

favour of God freely conferred upon us in Christ Jesus, from the commencement and through the whole process of it,—a course in which, from its very outset, we draw help and strength from the sanctuary, and look unto Him who dwelleth there, more in the light of a friend cheering us along the path of uprightness, than of a Lawgiver goading us forward by the threats and the terrors of authority, —a course, in which we walk with God as two walk together who are agreed, instead of walking with Him as if dragged reluctantly along by a force which it were even death to bring down in wrath and in hostility against us,—a course which we prosecute with the will, now gained over by gratitude, and touched by the love of moral and spiritual excellence, and enlightened in the great and final object of salvation, which is to prepare us for the kingdom of God in heaven, by setting up the kingdom of God in our hearts, even righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,—a course, the distinct object of which is to transform the character of man from its selfishness and its ungodliness, and not so much to surround him with celestial glories, as to give to him the worth, and the feelings, and the principles of a celestial mind.

Now, it often happens, that long after a formal admission has been given to the doctrines of the gospel, the mind may practically be far from being in a state of adjustment with a course of obedience, prosecuted in such a spirit, and with such an object as we have now been describing. There may be a course of very strenuous performance; but the old legal spirit may be yet unquelled, and the mind

of the inquirer be still weighed down under a sense of hopeless and inextricable bondage. There may, at the same time, be a speculative conviction of the vanity of good works; and many a weary attempt be made to raise up faith with a set of qualifications, which are destitute in themselves of all power and of all sufficiency to propitiate the favour of God. It, however, cannot be disguised, that works, in some shape or other, are as strenuously called for under the latter, as under the former dispensation; and we speak of an actual state of ambiguity on this subject, in which many have been involved, and where many have lingered for years in great helplessness and distress, when we say, that, unable to attain a clear and satisfactory perception of the way in which faith and works stand related to salvation, they have toiled without an object, and laboured to get onwards without coming sensibly nearer to any landing-place. There is a want of drift in their manifold doings. They are at one time fearful of being in the wrong, when they attempt to multiply their conformities to the divine law; learning so much from one class of theologians of the vanity of works, and the danger of self-righteousness. They are, at another time, impelled to action by a vague and general sense of the importance of works; learning from the Bible, and even from these very theologians, that works, brought down to utter insignificance at one part of the doctrinal argument, reappear at a future part of it, vested with a real importance in the matter of salvation. And thus do they vacillate in darkness, between a kind of general urgency to do upon the one hand; and, on the

other, a kind of indistinct impression that, as a Christian, his business is not to do, but to believe. And so there is either a halting of the mind, or an unceasing vibration of the mind, between two opinions; neither of which, at the same time, is very distinctly apprehended. The Christian who is steadfast and immoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, knows that his labour in the Lord is not in vain. Now he does not know this. He has been schooled, by an ill-conceived orthodoxy, into a suspicion of the worth and efficacy of all labour, and so is haunted and harassed by the imagination, that all his labour is in vain. The perplexity thickens around him, among the uncertain sounds of a trumpet coming to his ear, with what to him are dark and contradictory intimations; and we are not drawing a fanciful representation, but offering a faithful copy of what is often realized in human experience, when we say, that there are many inquirers, who, thus lost and bewildered in the midst of difficulties, embark in a race that is at once fatiguing and fruitless, and engage in a painful service, which they afterwards experience to be utterly unproductive.

The life and experience of the Rev. Thomas Scott, the Author of the excellent Tracts which compose the present Volume, afford a striking exemplification of the different states of activity in the prosecution of a religious life, which we have endeavoured to illustrate. He was long perplexed and bewildered amidst the errors which we have been exposing, and made many vain and fruitless attempts to attain to peace, by endeavouring to

establish a righteousness of his own, and it was not till humbled under a sense of the vanity and fruitlessness of all such attempts, that he took refuge in the all-sufficient righteousness of Christ, and found that peace he was so earnestly in quest of. In his "Force of Truth," he gives an honest and faithful delineation of the severe and protracted conflict he sustained, ere he found himself established on the sure foundation of the righteousness which is by faith. He experimentally found, that such an obedience as man can render, must be an obedience without hope, and without affection, and without one element which can liken it to the obedience of heaven—that the mere animal drudgery, to which a man feels himself impelled, by the impulse of force, or of fear, upon his corporeal powers, bears not only a different, but an essentially opposite, character, to that of an acceptable loyalty. He found that it is no religion at all, unless the heart consent to it, and the taste be engaged on its side, and the love which terror scares away, be the urging and inspiring principle; and the Lawgiver, instead of laying a reluctant constraint upon His creatures, sits enthroned in far more glorious supremacy over their will, thus exalting the service of God, from what it must be under the law, to what it may be under the gospel. But when the gospel came to him, in all the power and beneficence of conversion and grace, transforming the service of God, from the oldness of the letter to the newness of the spirit, by listing, on the side of godliness, all the faculties and affections of his moral nature, he became the humble, de-

voted, and self-denying Christian; and admirably illustrated the sure operation of genuine faith, in producing practical righteousness, and in forming those who are under its influence, in all the virtues and accomplishments of Christianity. Mr Scott was an eminently useful minister of the gospel. His sound, judicious, and practical writings, form a most valuable accession to the theology of our country. The lessons of such a life, and such an experience as he has honestly delineated, are highly instructive to every class of Christians, but, to the sincere inquirer after truth, we would especially recommend them; and, under such convictions as the "Force of Truth" may produce, he will find in the subsequent Tracts, which compose the present Volume, an excellent and practical exposition of those more peculiar doctrines of the gospel, the right understanding of which is so necessary to the attainment of peace and of holiness; and these expositions will derive a peculiar weight and importance, as coming from such a sound and experimental Christian.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

TO

PRIVATE THOUGHTS ON RELIGION

AND

A CHRISTIAN LIFE.

By WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, D.D.

THERE is a passage in the New Testament, where the law is made to stand to the sinner in the relation of a first husband; and on this relation being dissolved, which it is at the moment when the sinner becomes a believer, then Christ stands to him in the relation of a second husband; under which new relation, he brings forth fruit unto God, or, to use the expression of the apostle, "lives unto God." There is another passage from which we can gather, what indeed is abundantly manifest from the whole of Scripture, that to live unto God is in every way tantamount to living unto Christ—it being there represented as the general habit of believers, "to live no longer unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again." So that though there be no single quotation, where the two phrases are brought together, still it is a sound, because truly a scriptural, representation of the state of a believer, that he is dead unto the law, and alive unto Christ.

Now we are sensible, that these, and similar phrases, have been understood in two meanings, which, though not opposite, are at least wholly distinct from each other; that is, either as expressive of the judicial state, or the personal character of a believer. By one's judicial state, we mean that state into which he is put by the judgment or sentence of a law. If the law, for example, condemn us, we are judicially, by that law, in a state of condemnation. This may be viewed distinctly from our personal character. Now the first meaning of the phrases, or that by which they are expressive of a judicial state, would be more accurately rendered, by slightly changing each of the phrases, into "dead by the law," and "alive by Christ." Whereas the "being dead unto the law," and "alive unto Christ," serve, without any change, accurately to express the second meaning, or that which is descriptive of the personal character of those to whom it is applied. There is no liberty used with the Bible, when we affirm, that whether the one or other of these meanings be indeed the meaning in any particular case, the doctrine involved in each is true and scriptural doctrine—that, in the first instance, every believer is dead by the law, and alive by Christ; and that, in the second instance, he is dead unto the law, and alive unto Christ,—or, in other words, that in whomsoever the former truth has been realized, the latter truth shall be realized also.

Every believer, and indeed every man is dead by the law. This is naturally the judicial state of all. The law issued its commandments, and made death the penalty of their violation. We have all

incurred that penalty. It demanded not any given fraction of obedience, but a whole obedience—and this we have all come short of. We have at least incurred the sentence; and if the execution of it has not yet been fully inflicted, it is at least in sure reserve for those on whom it is to fall. They are like malefactors in custody. Their doom is awaiting them. They are not yet dead in reality, but they are dead in law. They have the dread prospect of the reality before them; and, if they have nought but the law to deal with, they may well tremble or be in despair, as the prisoners of a hopeless condemnation.

The greater part of men are at ease, even amid the urgencies of a state so alarming. That they have broken the law of God gives them no concern; and their life passes as carelessly along, as if the future reckoning, and future vengeance, were all a fable. So cheap do they hold the high jurisprudence of Heaven, that they are scarcely conscious of having offended against it; or if ever visited with the suspicion that their obedience is not up to the lofty standard of God's commandments, they compound the matter in another way, and bring down the commandments of God to the lowly standard of their own obedience. God hath revealed Himself to the world, under the impressive character of a God who is not to be mocked—yet would they inflict upon Him most degrading mockery, by robbing every proclamation of His against the transgressors of the law of all effect and all significancy. If there be any dignity in Heaven's throne, or any truth, and power, and force of character in Him who sitteth

thereon, His ordinations must stand fast, and His penalties, by which their authority is guarded, must have fulfilment. The government of the Supreme would be despoiled of all its majesty, if mercy were ever at hand to obliterate the guilt of our rebellion against it. The carnal heart of man may be proof against these demonstrations of guilt and of danger; yet, notwithstanding, it is true that we have incurred the debt, and come under the denunciations of a law, whereof it has been said, that heaven and earth must pass away ere one jot or one tittle of it shall fail.

This is the appalling condition of humanity, however seldom it may be adverted to, and however slightly it may be felt, in the listlessness of nature. To the great majority of men, all secure and unconscious as they are, it gives no disturbance. They are so much hurried with the manifold relations in which they stand to the things and the interests that are around them, that they overlook their great relation to God the Lawgiver, and to that law, all whose mandates have a force and a sanction that cannot be recalled. They are asleep to the awful realities of their state. They have trampled upon an authority which must be vindicated. They have incurred a threatening which must be discharged. They have insulted a throne whose dignity must be asserted—and cast contempt on a government, which shall rise in its might and its majesty from the degradation which they have tried to inflict upon it. The high attributes of the Divinity are against them. His Justice demands a satisfaction. His Holiness cannot but manifest the force of its recoil

from moral evil. His word stands committed to the death and the destruction of sinners—and a nature so immutable as His, never can recede from those great principles which mark the character of His administration. The greater part of men escape from all this terror, while they live in mere insensibility; and some there are, who, because less enormous transgressors than their fellows, can lull their every apprehension, and be at ease. But the law will admit of no compromise. It will treat with no degree or modification of evil. They have broken some of the things contained in the book of God's law, and by the law they are dead.

The most exempt, perhaps, from all disquietude on the score of that death to which the law has condemned them, are they who, decorous in all the proprieties, and honourable in all the equities, and alive, by the tenderness of a softened, sympathetic nature, to all the kindnesses of life, stand the freest from all those visible delinquencies by which the law is most notoriously and most disgracefully violated. They lie not—they steal not—they defraud not. They are ever prompt in humanity, and most punctual in justice. They acquit themselves of every relative duty to the satisfaction of those who are the objects of it; and exemplary in all the moralities of our social state, they sustain upon earth a high and honourable reputation. Nevertheless it is possible, nay it is frequent, that a man may be signalized by all these graces of character, and yet be devoid of godliness. The first and greatest commandment, which is the love of God, may be the object, not of his occasional, but of his constant and

habitual disobedience. In reference to this part of the law, he may have not merely fallen into many sinful acts, but more desperate still, he may be in a continual state of sinfulness. Instead of offending God at some times by the deeds of his hand, he may be offending him at all times, by that settled and invariable bent which there is in the desires of his heart. That bent may be wholly towards the world, and wholly away from him who made the world. He may have a thousand constitutional virtues: to use a familiar expression, he may have many good points or properties of character, and yet God not be in all his thoughts. His Father in heaven may have as little reason to be pleased with him, as an earthly father with that child, in whose history there may be a number of conformities with his own will, but in whose heart there is an obvious sullenness, or, at least, an utter disregard and indifference towards him. "Give me thy heart," says God, and "love Him with all thy heart," says the law of God. It is by viewing the law, in all its height, that we are made to feel how deep the condemnation is into which the law has placed us. Our actions may look fair in the eye of society, while it is manifest, to the eye of our own conscience, that our affections are altogether set on time, and on the creature, and altogether turned from the Creator. Those virtues, which give us a flourishing name upon earth, are not enough to transplant us into heaven. The law which said, "Do these things and live," finds its very first doing, or demand, unsatisfied, and bars our entrance into heaven. It convicts us, not perhaps of many specific sins;

but most awfully decisive of our fortune through eternity, it convicts us of an unremitting course or current of sinfulness; and so, dead by the law, the gate of life is shut against us.

The counter-part to this awful truth, that by the law the sinner is dead, is, that by Christ the believer is made alive. We may understand, in word and in letter, how this can be, even though we ourselves have had no part in the process. We may have the knowledge, though perhaps not the faith in it; and just as a spectator might look intelligently to a process in which he does not personally share, so might we have the literal apprehension of that way by which the sinner, who by the law is judicially dead, might by Christ become judicially alive. But aware of it though we be, it cannot be too often reiterated; and may the Spirit give a power and a demonstration to this important truth, when we say again how it is that the transgressor is made free. The sentence then is not annulled, it is only transferred. It is lifted up from his head, because laid on the head of another, who rather than that man should die, did Himself bear the burden of it. For this purpose did He bow Himself down unto the sacrifice, and submitted to that deep, that mysterious endurance, under which He had to sustain the weight of a world's atonement. The vials of the Lawgiver's wrath were exhausted upon Him. The law was magnified and made honourable in Him. In Him the work of vengeance was completed, and every attribute of the Godhead that man had insulted by his disobedience, died on the cross of Christ,

obtain its ample reparation. There, and under a weight of suffering which nought but the strength of the Divinity could uphold, the sacredness of the Divinity was awfully manifested; when, like a rainbow after the storm, the mercy of heaven arose out of the dark and warring elements, and has ever since shone upon our world, like a beauteous halo that now circles and irradiates all the other perfections of the Godhead. And the sight of it is as free to all, as is the sun in the firmament. The elements of light and of air, and the other common bounties of nature, are not more designed for the use of each and all of the human species, than is the widely sounding call of "Look unto me all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved." And whosoever he be that looks, and looks believingly, shall live. He is lightened of the burden of his guilt so soon as he puts faith in the Saviour. That great peace-offering for the sins of the world, becomes a peace-offering unto him. He exchanges conditions with his surety. His guilt is put to Christ's account, and Christ's righteousness is put to his account. He obtains his full discharge from the sentence that was against him; and whereas by the law he was dead, he hath made his escape from this judgment, and now by Christ is alive.*

We wish that we could give the adequate impression of that perfect welcome and good-will, wherewith all men are invited to the mercy-seat. Under the economy of the law there was a curse

* For a full and explicit statement of this doctrine, we refer the reader to the 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th Articles of Bishop Beveridge's belief, as drawn up by himself in the following Treatise.

pronounced upon every one who continued not in all the words that were written in its book to do them;" and the question is, how can any who has transgressed so much as one of these precepts, make his escape from this felt denunciation? Many there are who, to bring this about, would still keep up the old economy of the law, though in such a reduced and mutilated way, as might permit of an outlet to all but the most enormous of criminals. But the gospel provides this outlet in another way, more direct, and distinct, and consistent, by taking down the old economy, and setting up a new economy altogether. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us; and while by this expedient the honours of the commandment have been fully vindicated—by this expedient, also, the mercy of God, as if released from the impediment which held it, now goes forth rejoicingly, and in all its amplitude, to the furthest limits of a guilty world. There is not one so sunk in iniquity, that God, in Christ, does not beseech to enter forthwith into reconciliation. There is not one man under sentence of death by the law, to whom eternal life is not offered, and offered freely, as the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. The sceptre of forgiveness is held out even to the chief of sinners; and a way of access has been opened, by which one and all of them are invited to draw nigh. Heaven would have shrunk, so ethereal and so sensitive is its holiness—it would have shrunk, in quick and immediate recoil, from the approaches of the guilty; but the way by which they now

come is a consecrated way, consecrated by the blood of an everlasting covenant; and along which all of us are beckoned to move, by every call, and every signal of encouragement. We are dead by the law, but it is a death from which we are bidden, by the voice of the gospel, to come forth. And he that believeth therein, "though he were dead, yet shall he live."

This is the truth implied in the expression, that a Christian is dead by the law, and alive by Christ. We shall now consider the truth implied in the other expression, that a Christian is dead unto the law, and alive unto Christ. The former expression is significant of the judicial state of a believer. The latter is significant of his personal character. We may perhaps better understand the phrase of being "dead unto the law," when we think of such analogous phrases, as, the being dead unto sin; or dead unto the world; or dead to the fascinations of pleasure; or dead to the sensibilities of the heart; or dead to the urgencies of temptation. It expresses character, for it expresses man's insensibility, or the property that he has of being unmoved by certain objects that are addressed to him, but which either pleasurably or painfully affect the feelings of other men. He who can look unsoftened and unimpressed on a scene of wretchedness, or of cruel suffering, is dead to compassion. He who pities, and is in tenderness, is alive to it. He who can look without delight on the glories of a landscape, is dead to the charms of nature's scenery. He who can be told, without emotion, of some noble deeds of generosity or

horfour, is dead to the higher beauties of the mind, to the charms of moral grace, or of moral greatness.

A man is dead unto that, which, when present to him as an object of thought, is nevertheless not an object of feeling; and more especially when that which is lovely is placed within his view, and no love is awakened by it. It will therefore require some explanation, that we might apprehend aright the phrase of the apostle—"dead to the law." He cannot mean to say of himself, that he is dead to the beauties of that holiness which it contains—that he is dead to the worth of those virtues which lie engraven either on the first or second division of its tablet of jurisprudence—that he sees nought to admire in the godliness that is set forth in the one, or the humanity that is set forth in the other—that he is utterly devoid of ought like a taste, or an inclination within him, which can at all respond to that picture of moral excellence which the law puts before him; and so yielding no homage of desire towards it, he may have as good as renounced it in his doings. This surely is not the interpretation which can be put upon it; for the apostle elsewhere says of himself that he delighted in the law; and he eulogises it as holy, and just, and good. Holy men of old loved the law, and it was their meditation all the day long—and the lyre of the Psalmist is re-echoed by the longings of every Christian heart, when he says, "O how I love thy law;" and "blessed is the man that delighteth greatly in its commandments."

There must be something else then, in and about the law, to which a believer is dead, than either

the rightness of its precepts, or the moral and spiritual beauty of its perfections, when these are realized upon the character. Every true believer is most thoroughly alive both to the one and the other—and the question remains, What is it of the law to which he has become dead? Perhaps this question is best answered by the apostle's own statement, that we are dead in Christ, or that we have been partakers in his death—not that we partake with him in its sufferings, for this he endured alone, but we partake with him in its immunities, now that the sufferings are over. The believer stands now in the same relation to the law, that the man does, who has already sustained the execution of its sentence upon his person. It has no further claim upon him. He needs to fear no more, for he has to suffer no more. Its threatenings have all been discharged—not upon himself, it is true, but upon another for his sake, and by whom they have for ever been averted from his own soul. He may now fear as little, and feel as little, of the law's severity, as can the dead body of the executed criminal: and it is in this sense that the believer is dead unto the law—not dead to the worth and the loveliness of its commandments, but altogether dead to the terror of its condemnation—not unmoved by the grace and the rightness of its moralities, but wholly unmoved, because now wholly placed beyond the reach of its menaces—not dead to its voice, when it points to the way of peace and pleasantness, but now conclusively dead to its voice as a relentless judge, or its countenance as a fierce and determined avenger, so that the believer may

at once walk before God without fear, and yet walk before Him in righteousness and in holiness.

The older authors, whose writings are so much more richly fraught than those of our own days with the produce of deep and well-exercised intellect, on the various questions of theology, tell us of the law being now set aside as a covenant, while it remains with us as a rule of life. This single change of economy teaches us, to what of the law it is that we are dead, and to what of it we are still alive. We are dead to all those jealousies which are apt to arise about the terms and the punctualities of a bargain. There is no longer the lifting up of a bond, upon the one side, and this re-acted to by the spirit of bondage, upon the other. There are a dread and a distrust, and the feeling of a divided interest, between two parties, when it is the business of the one to look after the due performance of certain covenanted articles, and of the other, by his square and regular performance of these, just to do as much as that he may escape the denounced penalty, or as that he may earn the stipulated reward. "I call you no longer servants but sons," did our Saviour say to His disciples; and this, perhaps, goes most effectually to distinguish between the obedience which is under the old, and that which is under the new economy. We do the very same things under both, but in a wholly different spirit. As sons, we do them from the feeling of love. As servants, we do them by the force of law. It is the spontaneous taste of the one. It is the servile task of the other. The meat and drink of the servant lie in the hire

which is given for the doing of his master's will. The meat and drink of the son lie in the very doing of that will. He does not feel it to be a service, but the very solace and satisfaction of his own renovated spirit. It is well to apprehend this distinction; for it, in truth, is that which marks, most precisely, the evangelical from the legal obedience. To all these feelings, which have been termed the feelings, or the fears of legality, the believer under the economy of the New Testament is altogether dead. He is not exempted from service, but it is service in the newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter—not gone about in the style of a hireling, who looks merely to his reward, and is satisfied if he can but fulfil the literalities of that contract by which the reward is secured to him. We see how at once, by this single change, a new character is given to his obedience—how, when dead to the law, which tells him to do this and live, he looks away from all those narrow suspicions, and all those besetting fears, wherewith a mercenary service is encompassed—and how when alive to the gospel, which first gives him life, and then bids him do, he instantly ascends upon a higher walk of obedience, being now urged onward by a taste for the virtues of the law, and not by the terror of its violations—and instead of looking for some distinct reward after the keeping of the commandments, which in truth argues nothing spontaneously good in the character at all, feeling even now, that in the keeping of the commandments there is a very great reward.

With this explanation of what it is to be dead

unto the law, we may fully understand what it is to live unto Christ. As to be dead unto any object, is to want that sensibility which the object is fitted to awaken—then to be alive unto any object, is just to have the sensibility. One of our poets designates the child of sensibility to be one who is feelingly alive to each fine impulse. It is thus that we are alive to the call of distress—alive to the charms of a landscape—alive to the obligations of honour—alive to the charms of gratitude or friendship. It marks an attribute of the personal character, because it marks its degree of sensibility to any such objects as are presented to it: and we may easily consider what the result will be when Christ is the object, and when he to whom this object is addressed is alive unto Christ. Let us only conceive him to cast an intelligent look upon the Saviour, to compute aright the mighty surrender which He had to make, when He had to surrender the glory of heaven, for a death equivalent in its soreness to the eternity of accursed millions in hell—let us think of the tenderness to our world which urged Him forth upon the errand to seek and to save it, and the strength of that unquenchable love which so bore him up amid the pains and the perils of His great undertaking—let us but look on the fearful agonies, and listen to the cries, that, in the hour and power of darkness, were extorted from Him, who had the energy of the Godhead to sustain Him, and who, from the garden to the cross, had to travel through a mystery of suffering, that sinners might go free —let us but connect this terror, and these shrink-

ings, of the incarnate Godhead, with the peace of our own unburdened consciences, as we draw near unto the mercy-seat, and plead our full acquittal from that vengeance which has already been discharged, from that penalty which has been already borne—let us bring together in thought, even as they stand together in reality, the love of Christ and our own dear-bought liberty, and that to Him all the immunities of our present grace, and all the brightest visions of our future immortality are owing. To be awake unto all this with the eye of the understanding, and to be alive unto all this with the susceptibilities of the heart, is just to be in that practical state which we now endeavour to set forth—and under which it is, that every true Christian gives up the devotedness of his whole life, as an offering of gratitude to Him who hath redeemed it—and feeling that "he is not his own, but bought with a price, lives no longer to himself, but to the Saviour who died for him and who rose again."

But it is the unceasing aim of gratitude to gratify its object; and the question comes to be, What precise direction will this affection, now stirring and alive in our hearts towards Christ, impress upon our history. This will resolve itself into the other question, of how is it that Christ is most gratified? what is it that He chiefly wills of us, or that we can do, which His desires are most set upon? For the resolution of this inquiry, the Scriptures of truth give us abundance of testimonies. His will is our sanctification. The great and ultimate object for which He put forth His hand

upon us was to make us holy. He gave Himself up for us, that we might give ourselves up unto the guidance of that word, and the gracious operation of that Spirit, whereby He purifies unto Himself a peculiar people, and makes them zealous of good works. He has now risen to the throne of His appointed Mediatorship; and the voice that He addressed to His first disciples, still issues therefrom to the disciples of all ages—"If ye love me, keep my commandments;" and, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Now the commandments of Christ to whom we are alive, are just the individual commandments of that law to which we are dead. The things to which we were before driven by the terrors of authority, are the very things to which we are now drawn by the ties of gratitude. God in His love to righteousness framed all the virtues which compose it into the articles of a covenant that we had violated, but which now in Christ is settled and set by. And God in His still unabated love to righteousness, yet wills to impress all the virtues of it upon our person. What before He inscribed on the records of a written commandment, He would now infuse within the repositories of a believer's breast—and those precepts which, under the old economy, were the ground of a condemnation that is now taken away, compose, under the new economy, a rule of life, the obligation of which remaineth with us for ever.

Though the law be now taken away from the eye of the believer, yet Christ stands in its place, and these very virtues which were exacted by the

one, are still taught and exemplified by the other.* He is the image and representation of His Father, and long ere the moralities of absolute and everlasting rectitude were impressed on a tablet of jurisprudence, they had their place and their living delineation in the character of the Godhead. The laws and threatenings of the tablet are now expunged and taken away from the sight of the believer, but the character remains in full view, and now more impressively bodied forth than ever, because now a sensible representation has been given of it in the person of Jesus Christ. And to be alive unto Christ, is to be alive to the beauties of this representation. There is more implied by it than gratitude for His love. It further implies the admiration of His loveliness. With both together we superadd to the obedience of His precepts, the imitation of His example; and it is in the busy prosecution of them, that every true disciple abounds in the fruits of righteousness, and so lives unto God. The matter of the commandment is the same that it ever was. The motive only is changed. Then we wrought for the favour of God; or rather, under the despair of having fallen short, we wrought for the purpose of some possible escape, or to mitigate the vengeance that we found to be awaiting us. Now we work in the secure and conscious possession of this favour, and rejoice in the will and the ways of Him who rejoices over us to do us good. It has ceased to be the service of constraint. It

* We again refer the reader to that Section, in the Second Part of this Work, which treats of "The Imitation of Christ," for an admirable illustration of our preceding argument.

has come to be the service of willingness. It is a thank-offering, and more than this, it is our now voluntary deference to that law whose precepts we love, and love the more, that we have now been placed beyond the reach of its penalties. It is to the latter only that we are dead, for to the former we are most thoroughly alive; and, instead of the servilities of a forced obedience, we now render unto God the spontaneous homage of a free-man, the love and loyalty of a friend.

It is thus that every true disciple, while dead unto the law, is living unto God. We can imagine the law to be written on a tablet, and suspended between us and God; Him pointing both to its precepts and its penalties, and we become conscious of our utter deficiency from the one, and tremblingly alive to a dread of the other. It is well that this be felt by the sinner, till he is prevailed upon to flee from the coming wrath which is thus denounced upon him by the law, and to flee for refuge to the hope set before him in the gospel. Thus it is, in the language of Paul to the Colossians, that the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, is blotted out, and taken out of the way; and the believer is now dead to the terror of all those penalties, to which aforetime he had been most powerfully alive. The penalties are now taken out of sight, but the precepts are not taken out of sight. It is true that the frightful inscription, which stood as a barrier or an interdict between him and God, is now removed; and the consequence is, that he is now brought nigh unto God, whose character has undergone no change,

but who bears the same unaltered love to all the moralities of righteousness as before. And so those identical virtues which, under the law, are addressed unto men as the precepts of an authoritative code, and have been resisted by all, are still addressed unto men as the persuasions of a now reconciled friend, and which every believer in Jesus Christ finds to be irresistible. They stood then associated with the frown, and the compulsion, and the curse, and all the other accompaniments of a ministry of condemnation, to which by this time he is dead. They stand now associated with the kindness, and the affectionate urgency, and the sympathy of manifested example, and the native beauties of holiness, to all of which he is now most thoroughly, and most feelingly alive. The expression of a wish from God under the new dispensation, has a greater moral ascendancy over the believer's heart, than even a commandment had under the old. In a word, the spirit of bondage has fled away, and in its place has come the spirit of adoption, in the power of which he lives unto God, and abounds in all the fruits, and all the performances of willing obedience.

We may now understand how it is that a change in the judicial state brings about a change in the private character; how it is, that he who is dead by the law, when he is made alive by Christ, becomes dead unto the law and alive unto Christ. When we receive the truth that is in Jesus, we are justified: for then we are justified by faith. And to understand the way in which this truth makes us holy; or, how it is that we are sanctified by faith, we have

only to consider the believer as dead unto the law, in the sense wherein we have already explained it, simply because he now believes that Christ hath redeemed him from its condemnation and its curse. It is because of the connexion between his faith and his peace. He is no longer alive to the terror of those threatenings which are by the law, now that he sees its threatenings to have been all of them discharged. He is no longer under the dread of its vengeance, now that the vengeance is absorbed. He is no longer afraid of a reckoning for the debts and deficiencies that he had incurred, seeing that Christ has been reckoned with as his surety—bearing the penalties of his disobedience, and giving him in exchange, the reward of His own perfect righteousness. It is just because he has been made judicially alive by Christ, that he is now dead to all the alarm of that judicial condemnation under which he aforetime lay. The one comes simply and immediately out of faith in the other; and is the same sort of moral phenomenon with that of a man ceasing to have the apprehension of a danger that impended over him, on the moment of being made to perceive that the danger has passed away.

But, the believer is not only dead unto the law, but alive unto Christ. This is because of the connexion between his faith and his gratitude. It is by Christ's work that we are released from the pains of a violated law; but yet, it is His will that we do the precepts of it; and in His person too there is the highest exemplification of its graces and virtues. When we believe in His work, we become alive to a sense of cordial and willing obli-

gation; and when we understand what His will is, we become alive to the moralities of that very law, to whose menaces we are altogether dead. It is at that transition by which we are released from its penalties, that we become riveted to the admiration of its perfections, and the devoted followers of its truth and justice, and humanity and holiness. Every man who has been made alive by Christ, must be alive to Him; so as to live no longer to himself, but to live unto Christ who died for him, and who rose again. There is nought in the gospel which exempts us from obedience, but every thing in it and about it which excites us to obedience—to obedience in a better spirit than we could possibly have under the law—to obedience, if we may so speak, in a higher style of it,—not the obedience that is extorted by terror or by power, but the obedience to which we are urged by taste and by gratitude. And amid all the darkenings of human controversy and explanation, one thing is clear—even the apostolical test of our truly knowing Christ, that we keep His commandments.

But, while we insist on this as the true test of discipleship, we are no less strenuous in insisting on a sound faith, convinced as we are of the intimate connexion which subsists between a sound faith and a sound practice. Without the former we have the highest authority for stating, that it is impossible to please God; though the latter we hold to be no less necessary as the indispensable preparation for heaven, since without holiness no man can see God; and therefore would we labour to make every inquirer acquainted with the foundation of a Chris-

tian's hope, as well as the rule of a Christian's practice. And, for this purpose, instead of offering any further exposition of our own on these two most important topics, we would recommend to his perusal the two following Treatises of Bishop Beveridge, "Thoughts on Religion," and "On a Christian Life," where he will find an admirable conjunction of the great doctrines of Christianity, with those graces and accomplishments of the Christian character, which form the necessary fruits and consequences of a genuine faith in these doctrines; and from which are derived the only motives of sufficient power and potency, for establishing the authority of Christian morality in the heart, and for securing obedience to it in the life.

In his first Treatise, this learned and pious prelate gives an enumeration of the articles of his faith, with a clearness and precision which indicate that he had a distinct and scriptural view of the dispensation of grace, in all its relations and dependencies; while the "Resolutions" formed thereupon, deduced as they are from the articles of his faith, and deriving from them their whole force and urgency of motive, are admirably fitted for regulating the affections and conduct of the aspiring candidate for heaven. And we apprehend, that it is from the want of such distinct and well-defined rules for the government of their thoughts, and actions, and general intercourse in the world, which this pious bishop deemed so necessary for the regulation of his own heart and life, that many professing Christians, not otherwise defective in a sound orthodoxy, do nevertheless exhibit much

that is defective and inconsistent in their Christian profession. In this so important a branch of Christian duty, and so conducive to the consistency and comfort of the Christian life, the example of this excellent prelate is highly worthy of imitation; and when entered into, in an humble dependence on the strength and sufficiency of Him in whose grace alone he can be strong, the Christian disciple will find it conducive to his personal sanctification and growth in the divine life.

The second Treatise contains a no less excellent and valuable exposition of several important topics, which are intimately connected with the formation and successful prosecution of the Christian life. His observations on the Christian education of children, are entitled to the serious regard of those parents who are in earnest to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and, in the subsequent topics, which form the concluding portion of his work, there is a close and forcible application of truth to the conscience, addressed with all the power and solemn earnestness of a man, who felt as well as understood the truths he was expounding. Bishop Beveridge was an eminent and successful minister of the gospel of Christ, and was a distinguished ornament of that church of which he was a dignitary; and we cannot give a better portraiture of this truly good and pious man, both as a private Christian and as a public functionary, than by transcribing the following character of him, as drawn by his biographer.

"This great and good bishop had very early addicted himself to piety and a religious course of

life, of which his Private Thoughts upon Religion will be a lasting evidence. They were written in his younger years; and he must a considerable time before this, have devoted himself to such practices, otherwise he could never have drawn up so judicious and sound a declaration of his faith, nor have formed such excellent resolutions so agreeable to the Christian life in all its parts. These things show him to be acquainted with the life and power of religion long before, and that even from a child he knew the Holy Scriptures. And as his piety was early, so it was very eminent and conspicuous, in all the parts and stations of his life. As he had formed such good resolutions, he made suitable improvements upon them; and they, at length, grew up into such settled habits, that all his actions savoured of nothing but piety and religion. His holy example was a very great ornament to our church; and he honoured his profession and function by zealously discharging all the duties thereof. How remarkable was his piety towards God! What an awful sense of the divine Majesty did he always express! How did he delight in His worship and service, and frequent His house of prayer? How great was his charity to men; how earnestly was he concerned for their welfare, as his pathetic addresses to them in his discourses plainly discover! How did the Christian spirit run through all his actions, and what a wonderful pattern was he of primitive purity, holiness, and devotion! As he was remarkable for his great piety and zeal for religion, so he was highly to be esteemed for his learning, which he

wholly applied to promote the interest of his great Master. He was one of extensive and almost universal reading; he was well skilled in the oriental languages, and the Jewish learning, as may appear from many of his sermons; and, indeed, he was furnished to a very eminent degree with all useful knowledge. He was very much to be admired for his readiness in the Scriptures: he had made it his business to acquaint himself thoroughly with those sacred oracles, whereby he was furnished unto all good works: he was able to produce suitable passages from them on all occasions, and was very happy in explaining them to others. Thus he improved his time and his abilities in serving God, and doing good, till he arrived at a good old age, when it pleased his great Master to give him rest from his labours, and to assign him a place in those mansions of bliss, where he had always laid up his treasure, and to which his heart had been all along devoted through the whole course of his life and actions. He was so highly esteemed among all learned and good men, that when he was dying, one of the chief of his order deservedly said of him, 'There goes one of the greatest, and one of the best men, that ever England bred.'"

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

TO

THE REIGN OF GRACE,

FROM ITS RISE TO ITS CONSUMMATION.

By ABRAHAM BOOTH.

THERE is no one term which is more frequently employed in the Bible, to denote our relationship to God, than the term *covenant*. But though the import of this term is sufficiently understood when it relates to the intercourse between man and man, we fear it is very indistinctly apprehended when it expresses our relation to God. A covenant is an agreement between at least two parties, and it is generally at first proposed by one of them, and then acceded to by the other. If the former be very distinct, and absolute, and peremptory in the terms that he lays down, the latter, in the act of giving his acquiescence, feels that he is coming under very distinct and certain obligations. The engagement is just felt to be as formal upon the one side, as it is upon the other—and when it is a contract between man and man, there is a strict and definite understanding, both with him who originated the articles, and him who complies with them.

It is thus, in any social or earthly covenant. We there see how anxiously the utmost explicitness

is secured, by one clause and one stipulation after another, that each may know the distinct place he has to occupy, and the distinct part he has to perform. There is a certain relative position in which the one party stands to the other, so that when the one enters upon his place in the covenant, and then acts the part that is assigned to him, the other conforms to the covenant by entering upon his place, and acting the part that is assigned to him. Were there a loose or obscure understanding on the one side, then, on the other side, there might be freedom for a loose and obscure understanding also. But a well-framed covenant does away all looseness, and admits of nothing but what is strict and determinate; so that all who are concerned may have a clear and well-defined path to walk in. The formal and peremptory attitude of one party in the covenant, calls for a corresponding attitude from the other, and summons him to an observation just as pointed and as rigorous as the terms that are imposed. And the line of performance for each is so marked out, that each is fully aware when he keeps by it, and as fully aware when he steps aside into any track of deviation.

Now, if such be the real force and import of a covenant, what a lesson does it hold forth, when this is the very term that the Bible so often employs in expressing that transaction by which a man enters into a right relationship with God. What a power of rebuke is conveyed by this single term, on the loose, and indefinite, and floating imaginations of almost every man, as to the right federal position which he himself should occupy,

and as to the question, whether he has actually and personally entered upon it. What a fell denunciation does this one vocable carry with it, not merely on the unsettledness of his accounts with God, but on the unsettledness even of his conceptions, as to the footing upon which, if we may use the expression, the account is opened with Him. How vague the apprehensions of the vast majority are, as to the terms in which an agreement is struck with God, and as to the way and method in which that agreement is kept up and maintained with Him. And this charge extends a great deal farther than to those who profess no care and no concern about the matter. How many may be specified of those who are versant in the whole orthodoxy of the new covenant, and yet with whom the question is altogether undetermined, whether it be a covenant that they have individually laid hold of. They love the evangelical language, and they like to breathe in the atmosphere of an evangelical society, and they feel that the decided preference of their taste is towards the tone and habit of evangelical professorship, and yet, with all this, they have not set themselves to the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" with that pointedness, and formality, and mature deliberation upon articles, which the very term of a covenant appears to demand of them. They breathe, perhaps, many good desires, and are in the way of many good impulses, and give their most cordial assent to the truth and importance of all the scriptural doctrine that is proposed to them; nay, can speak soundly and well about the new covenant, and yet have

never distinctly, and solemnly, and individually, charged the obligation of its articles upon themselves—living very much adrift and at random after all—with no distinct place of relationship to God, personally and actually in occupation—with no urgent or practical sense of any clearly articled engagement between Him and them, viewed in the light of two parties linked together by the tie of mutual promises, and respectively bound to certain mutual performances, and habitually unconscious, all the day long, of having taken up any position in which they have certain appropriate duties to discharge, and every occupier of which has the right to look from the other party in the contract for the fulfilment of certain stipulations.

Meanwhile there is no want either of clearness or of precision with God. All is pointed and peremptory in the manifesto that He has given of Himself to the world. He wills us to enter into covenant with Him, but lays down the terms of it in a way so distinct and so authoritative, as to preclude and lay an interdict upon all others. In framing the articles of this covenant, all the high and unchanging principles of heaven's jurisprudence were concerned—and we behold upon the face of it, the sure impress of that moral character which obtains in the sanctuary above. It is a document which announces the truth, and the justice, and the uncompromising dignity of the government by which it has been issued; and there is indeed a striking contrast between the disregard in which it is held by men on earth, and the intense earnestness of that gaze which it drew from the choirs and

the, companies of the celestial. "Which things the angels desire to look into." So that there is no lightness, and no looseness, in the terms of that proposal which came down to us from heaven. The question, of how an alliance between God and sinners could be struck, and how a right ceremonial of approach and meeting between the parties could be adjusted, and what sort of compact ought to be devised, so as to satisfy the claims, and suit itself to the character of each—these are questions which, however slighted in a world, where all that is above, is looked to through the dull medium of its gross and incumbent carnality—they are questions which have exercised the purest and mightiest intelligences in nature, and which belong to the very essence of the rectitude that is everlasting. They are questions, for the right determination of which, we see all heaven, as it were, in a busy movement of concern —and the public mind of God's unfallen universe, at least, directed in solemn contemplation towards them, and an overture made out with all the form and circumstance of a covenant that was to be unalterable; and this delivered into the hands of a Mediator, who, both by the dignity of His person, and the power of His high, though mysterious achievements, has added to the weight and sacredness of the whole transaction;—and thus has it been ushered in with a style of authority to the notice of our species, who are called to listen, that they may hear of the only way in which God will be approached, and of the only terms in which He will treat with them. And is not this a call upon us to look more strictly into the matter of our relation-

ship with God, and a reproach to us for the vague indifference of our minds upon the subject, and an urgent application to our conscience, whether we have taken up our part in the account, and whether there has been such an event in our history, as a great federal transaction between us and the Lawgiver in heaven; whether we have struck with Him; or closed with Him, upon His own terms; whether the fulfilment of our part of the covenant in time, is our habitual business, and the fulfilment of His part of it, both in time and in eternity, is our habitual expectation—in a word, whether we are living as we list, or living by the terms of a treaty actually concluded and entered upon between us and God. These are questions that need to be addressed, not merely to those on whom the terms and the obligations of religion have no hold, but to those who are longing after it, though in hitherto fruitless aspirations; to those who, yet wrapt in a kind of general mistiness, have never seen the certainty of that track which they have to pursue, and never felt the solidity of that ground which they have to walk upon—who sigh, and expatiate, and spend their earnestness among fruitless generalities—who still feel themselves bewildered in the haze of undefined speculation—and have neither the confident look, nor yet the confirmed footstep of him who knows his calling, and who has actually taken hold of a sure and a well-ordered covenant.

We apprehend that there is an actual, and a highly interesting class, who exemplify the very condition of mind which we now attempt to characterize. The truth is, it marks a sort of transitive

state in the progress from nature to grace, which the great generality of inquirers have to undergo. There is such a thing, as a longing desirousness to be right, but without any clear or steady perception of the avenue that leads to it—an honest, but yet an undirected inclination of the mind towards God—a heart under the visitation of strong concern, that its possessor should be what he ought, and do what he ought, but still labouring in the midst of many fears and many fluctuations, and that just because he looks with a still clouded eye, on the field of spiritual contemplation that lies before him. This is a state, which reminds us somewhat of the exercise of the Psalmist, when he says, "My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times," and that, shortly after he had said, in the perplexity of his felt darkness, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Now we would pronounce of him who is in this state, that his face is towards Zion. He is seeking the Lord, if haply he may feel after Him and find Him; and labouring to enter upon a rest which he hath not yet attained to—familiar with all the sounds and all the doctrines of orthodoxy, but without being conscious as yet, of having taken up that position which orthodoxy would assign individually to him—rather trying to put himself into the attitude of readiness for the Lord, than actually waiting in that attitude for the coming of the Lord—thoroughly aware that there is a posture of preparation, but utterly in the dark, whether it is a posture that he has personally assumed—and in the face of a covenant offered from

heaven for his acceptance, with all its articles penned under the dictates of clear and unerring wisdom, still "running as uncertainly, still fighting even as one that beateth the air."

This is a matter which ought not to be left in a state of unsettledness. If ever there was a business which it were desirable should be brought to a point, it is surely that which involves in it the state of a creature towards God. Of all the questions that lie within the compass of human speculation, this ought not to be abandoned to the caprices of a loose and floating imagination. "What shall I do to be saved?" and "wherewithal shall I come before God?" these are interrogatories precise in the object of them, nor should we rest satisfied with any thing short of a precise and clearly intelligible solution. It is woful to think of the frivolity wherewith the mind can shift itself away from the urgency of these questions, and by an act of indefinite postponement, can commit them to a futurity that, in all likelihood, will ever be receding till that hour which separates its mispent time from its unprovided eternity. Were there any thing slack or indeterminate in the articles of God's message to the world, this might well apologize for a corresponding remissness on the part of man. But when this message has come in pointed application to us, and armed with all the rigour and imperative force of an *ultimatum*, and has taken the shape of a covenant, in which God offers His terms, and both demands and entreats our compliance with them—there is no room left for parrying or evasion; nor do we meet aright this advancing movement on the

part of God, but by our distinct response to His distinct and peremptory overtures.

It were well, if, under the impulse of such considerations, we were to take up the language of the Prophet, and say, "Come then, and let us so join ourselves to the Lord." There is one way of setting forth upon this movement, to which nature feels a very strong and general inclination. Nothing can be more natural than the conclusion —that hitherto we have done wrong, and are therefore out of terms and out of friendship with God. Let us henceforth do right, and thus we shall recover the ground from which our own sins have disposted us. There is a universal propensity among men to feel in this manner. It is by our own doings that we have forfeited our claim upon God; and it is by our own doings that the claim is to be re-established. The truth is, that though the old covenant of—"Do this and live," is now an utter wreck, in virtue of man's disobedience, yet the feelings and tendencies of man's unrenewed nature still retain, as it were, the very mould and impress of such a covenant; and we are not aware of a more prevailing imagination, or of one that lurks more insidiously, and operates more powerfully in the human bosom, than that acceptance with God can somehow be carried by a certain character of meritoriousness, in the desire of our own hearts, and in the doing of our own hands. And this, our first attempt, is so to manage, as that heaven shall be rightfully ours, in virtue of our rendered services, and that it shall come to us on the footing of a legal payment, by which value is given

for the value that has been received. The secret, but certain aim, in the first instance, of every man who goes out in quest of immortality, is so to qualify himself, as that he may demand it as a right at the bar of justice, instead of suing for it as a boon at the bar of mercy. And this is what the Bible calls, "going about to establish a righteousness of our own"—founding a plea on which we may challenge heaven as our well-earned remuneration, or as the fulfilment of a bargain between two parties—standing on the even ground of "work and win," upon the one side, and, "accept of that work, and bestow an adequate reward for it," upon the other. The man who works with this for his object, is said to work in the spirit of legality; and this we hold to be the aspiring and universal spirit of nature, in its first attempts to reunite with the God from whom sin has so widely dissevered it.

This fond and clinging tendency on the part of man, to get into terms with God on the footing of the old covenant, after that covenant has been broken into shreds, or, if he persist in his tendency, will gather itself up against him into a body of overwhelming condemnation, has come down to us from our first parents, and is deeply incorporated with that nature which they have transmitted over the whole family of their descendants. It is not peculiar to Jews, who wanted to make a righteousness out of their Mosaic law. It extends to the men of all countries, and of all colours, who, out of the law of conscience, or the law of conventional propriety in their neighbourhood, or the law to which tradition, and revelation, and custom, have made

their respective contributions still want to form a righteousness of their own, which God, on the principles of justice, shall be bound to accept, and, on the same principles, shall be bound to reward. This spirit of legality, whatever may be its disguises, has a prompting and a presiding influence at the outset of all our returning movements unto God. And it is a spirit to which He has most broadly adverted in the new covenant, that He has framed for the purpose of bringing sinners again into fellowship with Himself, and there He peremptorily refuses to give it any countenance. He utterly refuses to enter into any degrading compromise with human sinfulness—and, setting up the authority of His law, as a thing that was unchangeable and irreducible, He holds that, by one act of disobedience, the foundation of merit, on the part of the creature, is utterly cut away. It is said of God, that He cannot lie, and therefore may it be said of Him, that He cannot accept the unfinished conformities of man to a rule that is inflexible; He cannot accept of these as the claims to which are to be adjudged the high rewards of heaven's jurisprudence. We are outcasts from the old covenant, if, in a single instance, we have made free with the authority of God, or trampled on any of His requirements. And on the face of the new covenant, there is nothing that stands out more strongly, than the decisive check which it has laid on the spirit of legality, than the wide and welcome way in which it throws open the gate of heaven to all, if willing to enter there on the footing of a divine grant, and the firm interdict which, at the same time, it throws across the path of all who

offer to approach on the footing of their own merits. There is not one more obvious or prominent characteristic of the gospel, than just the way in which it meets and encounters the spirit of legality at the very outset, and must either conquer it into entire submission, or decline to treat with it altogether. It holds forth an alternative, on the one side of which the access between God and man is hopelessly and everlastingly barred, and on the other side of which there is a patent way of approach, even to the place "where His honour dwelleth," and where His favour is as free as the elements of air and light, to all who will. All who propose to join themselves to the Lord in that covenant, to which He has actually put His consenting hand, ought to be aware of this—nor are they prepared for such a movement, till brought to acquiesce in the saying, "that not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He hath saved us."

But it is altogether worthy of remark, that the mercy by which we are saved, is mercy in conjunction with righteousness. On the work of our redemption, the sacredness of the Godhead stands as prominently out as does the tenderness of the Godhead. God did not so love the world, as, under the simple instigation of a compassionate feeling towards it, to send a message of forgiveness, and thus make known to sinners the mere clemency of His nature. He so loved the world, as to send His only begotten Son into it, who took upon Him the punishment of our guilt, and the whole burden of that obedience which we should have rendered; and thus made known the righteousness of His nature,

as well as its clemency, in that He thereby approved Himself just, while the Justifier of those who believe in Jesus. This is the leading characteristic of the gospel dispensation. It is a dispensation of mercy, but of mercy in alliance with truth; a mercy illustrative of all those high and unchangeable perfections which belong to the great moral Sovereign of the universe. He makes us all welcome to pardon, but it is to pardon sealed by the blood of a divine atonement. He beckons the guiltiest of men to draw nigh, but it is only by the path of an appointed and consecrated mediatorship. He holds out the remission of sins to one and to every; yet it is not a simple sentence of remission that He passes upon any, but a sentence of justification; or, in other words, a sentence given in consideration of a righteousness. To every sinner there is declared the offer of his remission, that, in laying hold of it, he may do homage to the gentle and compassionate attributes of the Deity. But to every sinner there is declared at the same time, the righteousness on which this deed of remission is founded, that he may also do homage to the august and holy attributes of the Deity. He who confides in the general mercy of God, would break up this association, which God will never consent to dissolve. His hatred of sin, and the high moral regard He bears to the worth and the rectitude of virtue, are stamped on every feature of that economy which He has instituted for the acceptance and recovery of the sinful. It is thus that the priesthood of Christ stands forward to observation, in characters of sanctity, as bright and legible as it does in the characters of benignity.

And therefore it is not a proffer of bare mercy, but of propitiated mercy, that is held out for our acceptance. God does not set forth Himself with a general declaration of pardon to the sins of mankind; but He sets forth His Son a propitiation for the sins of mankind. And what we have to look to, is not the mercy of God unguarded and unqualified; but the mercy of God in Christ, and through Christ, reconciling the world.

There is no question that appears to have been more solemnly entertained, and more deliberately weighed in the counsels of the upper sanctuary, than how to determine the footing on which the guilty shall be taken back again, into acceptance with the God whom they had offended. And to provide a solid footing, Christ had both to serve and to suffer in our stead. Lest our sins should pass unreckoned, and so escape the punishment that was due to them, they were reckoned unto Christ; and lest the righteousness that He as Mediator has brought in, should pass unreckoned, and so miss of a reward, it is reckoned unto us. And thus, in the highest exhibition of generosity that ever was given to the world, we behold, at the same time, all the precision of a justice that could not deviate, and all the unchangeableness of a truth that could not fail. Had we fulfilled the law of God, heaven would have been ours, and it would have been given to us because of our righteousness. We have broken that law, and yet heaven may be ours, not because of our righteousness, but still because of a righteousness; and the honour of God is deeply involved in the question,

What and whose righteousness this is? It is not the righteousness of man, but the righteousness of Christ reckoned unto man. The whole distinction between a covenant that is now exploded, and the covenant that is now in force, hinges upon this alternative. If we make a confidence of the former plea, we shall perish; and if of the latter, we shall have life everlasting.

God is merciful; and in virtue of this, it was His longing desire to frame a deed of reconciliation, and to convey it to our world. But God is also righteous; and in virtue of this, the very peculiar economy of a mediatorship, and an incarnation, and a sacrifice, had to be instituted, through which this deed of mercy was to pass; and in its way, it became tinged as it were, with the full expression of the entire and unbroken character of the Godhead. So, that when it reaches the sinner, it bears upon it the impress of the divine justice, as well as of the divine benignity. It is only by the acceptance of this deed on the part of the sinner, that God will consent on His part to take the sinner into acceptance. He will not enter into fellowship with the guilty, but in such a way as shall secure their complete recognition of all the attributes of His nature. Forgiveness by a mere demonstration of mercy is not that way. Reward from Him as a generous master, to man for his own righteousness, though an unworthy servant, is not that way. The way must be such as to manifest not a degraded, but a vindicated Sovereign; and so, that the mercy which He awards shall be that, not of fallen, but of exalted majesty.

And hence the peremptory announcement, that no man cometh unto the Father but by the Son, and the no less peremptory rejection of every man who offers by any other approach, to draw nigh unto the sanctuary. The whole character of heaven's jurisprudence hangs upon the question, Whether man shall stand before God upon his own righteousness, or the righteousness of Christ? nor is there a more direct and pointed article in that covenant by which a sinner joins himself to God, than, that on the one ground he will never meet with acceptance, and on the other ground, he will never miss it.

It is painful to be told of the insecurity of all those refuges to which nature most fondly clings, and in which she most rejoices as her favourite hiding-place. Man is never more in his element, than when building a security before God, on some plea or palliation of his own; and it is not without a sigh, or without a struggle, that he can behold the foundation of all merit in himself utterly swept away. The only redress we can offer, is to assure him of the stability of that other, and that only foundation on which we invite him to build. It is to announce to him, in the language of Scripture, that as he has failed in making out a righteousness by his obedience to the law, "Christ is the end of the law for this righteousness, to every one that believeth." It is to make him perceive, that if he will only consent to stand on the righteousness of Christ, as the alone ground of his dependence, God will stand by the articles of His own covenant, for the fulfilment of which we have both His affir-

mation and His oath, as our immutable guarantees. He will never mock the confidence which His own word has inspired, and therefore one and all should encourage themselves on the strength of this assurance, and cast the cause of their acceptance on that unfailing plea, that is never lifted up by man without ascending in welcome to the throne of God. The merit of His well-beloved Son is to Him the incense of a sweet-smelling savour, so that the guiltiest creature who takes shelter there, has posted himself on the very avenue, along which there ever rolls the tide of divine complacency. We should invest ourselves then with this merit, and wrap ourselves firmly in it, as in a covering. We should put on Christ, who is offered to us without money and without price. We should sist ourselves before God, with His invitation as our alone warrant, and the truth of His promises, which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, as our alone confidence. His place in the new covenant is to declare our forgiveness, through the blood of a satisfying atonement. Our place in the covenant, is to give credit to that declaration. If each of the parties take his own place, all the promises that have passed from the one to the other will have their fulfilment. If we have faith in God, according to our faith, so will be His faithfulness.

The act of laying hold of this covenant, is primarily and essentially an act of the mind. It is a business, at the doing of which, there may have been no visible or external movement at all; a transaction entered upon, and completed in no other character of agency, than the character of

thought, and the fruit of a silent interview between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man, the former showing unto the latter the things of Christ, and the latter rendering the consent of his understanding and belief to this demonstration. These are the unseen but substantial steps, by which an act of reconciliation is struck between the two parties, and both the overtures on the one side, and the responses on the other, may be altogether mental. When God makes it known to the sinner, by His word and Spirit, that Christ hath wrought out a perfect righteousness, to the whole use and validity of which he is just as welcome as if the righteousness were personally his own; and when the sinner, persuaded of the truth of this, is simply translated into the same confidence before God that he would have had, had his own personal righteousness been perfect like that of Christ's; then the covenant of grace is in very deed entered upon, and without any other forth-putting on the part of God, than the exhibition of His word to man, and any other forth-putting on the part of man, than the acquiescence that he has rendered thereto. God's declaration of a righteousness unto all, and upon all who believe, constitutes His offer. The credit we give to this declaration, constitutes our acceptance. To receive Christ, we have only to believe in His name. It is altogether a mental process. Our renunciation of the plea of our own righteousness, is a mental act. Our reliance on the plea of the righteousness of Christ, is a mental act. Our drawing upon God for forgiveness and justification in the name of this righteousness, is a

mental act. And God hath graciously bound Himself to accept and to honour this method of drawing. He has so ordered the covenant between us and Him, that on our simply counting Him faithful who hath promised, He counts Himself pledged to the fulfilment on us of what is so promised. Could we state the thing more freely we would do it, for sure we are that the more freely it is stated, the more truly it is stated. We have failed in making out a title-deed to God's favour by our own obedience. Christ hath made one out for us by His obedience. If we believe it to be a good title-deed, it is ours, if we will. Should we be satisfied with it, God is. We are putting honour upon Christ, when we trust in the plea of His righteousness; and God is putting honour upon Christ, when He sustains the validity of this plea. Thus, there is a common place of meeting between God and the sinner, when the belief of the one, and the blessing of the other, come into close and rejoicing fellowship. Should any one who reads his Bible, and relying on God's testimony, conceive this belief, then, on the strength of this mental inclination alone, he has laid hold of the covenant. He has become invested with a complete righteousness, the whole reward of which will be conferred on him, simply because of his reliance upon it. It is his by faith. A negotiation has been going on between God and his soul, and such is the force and obligation of the contract which has resulted from it, between the two parties —that while the one is bound to depend, the other is bound not to disappoint him.

We never shall obtain any secure or legitimate rest to our minds, till we have thus found it in Jesus Christ, as the Lord our righteousness—till we have come to trust wholly in His merit, and not at all in our own, as our alone plea of meritorious acceptance with the righteous Lawgiver—till the free offer of a title to eternal life, through the obedience of another, be met by our faithful acceptance of it; and on cleaving to it as our single but sufficient claim to reconciliation, have learned in this attitude to walk in quietness, and with confidence before God.

It is not in our power to reason any one into this confidence. It springs in the heart of man, on the simple statement of the truth, and by the manifestation of that truth, by the Spirit, unto the conscience. Argument and eloquence are alike unavailing towards the production of it. It is by the doctrine being presented to the mind, and the mind perceiving in the doctrine a counterpart to its own wants; it is thus that the faith comes which is unto salvation. We have endeavoured to offer a faithful exhibition of the truth as it is in Jesus; and it is the part of the inquirer to ponder it attentively, and the Spirit may so convince of sin, and may so manifest the suitableness of the proffered Saviour, as to assure him, that this is indeed the wished for remedy to the grievous and deep felt disease. And therefore would we state the averments of Scripture, on this most essential and interesting of all subjects, with the view of putting it to those who have sought for rest, and have not yet found it, whether these words bear not the evidence of a testimony from

heaven, seeing it is only by a sure and simple reliance upon them, that they can reach the object they have so long and so vainly been in quest of.

"Christ was delivered for our offences." "Christ hath made an end of transgressions, and brought in an everlasting righteousness." "God hath set Him forth a propitiation for the sins of the world." "He died the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God." "He has been made sin for us, though He knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." "Justified by faith, we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." "And all who believe in Him, are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law." Inasmuch that one shall say, "In the Lord have I righteousness;" and "this is the name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." The labour of a whole life directed to the object of establishing a merit of our own, will only widen our distance from peace; and, we know of nothing that will send this visitant to our agitated bosoms, but a firm and simple reliance on these declarations. The unbelief of man is the only obstacle which the mercy of God in Christ has to struggle with; nor do we know of one other step that is necessary, but an act of faith on the part of the sinner, that this mercy may take its ample effect and fulfilment upon his person. It is simply by an act of believing, by a pure act of the mind, that he enters into reconciliation, and a covenant is established, as steadfast and immutable as it is in the power of solemn guarantees to make it—a covenant with only one tie, but that

a most sufficient one, to bind it, even the tie which subsists between the faith of the creature, and the faithfulness of the Creator.

And it is for the purpose of presenting to our readers a full and very able exposition of the truths on which we have been insisting, that we have introduced into our Series of Christian Authors the following Treatise, on "*The Reign of Grace, from its rise to its consummation,*" by ABRAHAM BOOTH, which we earnestly recommend to their attentive perusal, as one of the most powerful and luminous, and comprehensive expositions of the dispensation of grace with which we are acquainted. In this Treatise, they will find the Gospel of the Grace of God exhibited in all the fulness and freeness of its unrestricted offers of mercy, through the Saviour, to guilty man—in all the extent of its exuberant blessings, in its rich provisions for deliverance from condemnation and guilt, and restoration to the favour and friendship of God—in all the efficacy of its renovating and sanctifying influences in forming us to holiness, and in assimilating us to the spirit and character of God—and in all the benign and diversified operations, which a God of infinite wisdom and love has fitted it to produce, by causing it to reign unto eternal life through Jesus Christ, as made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and complete redemption.

Originating, as those blessings and privileges do, in this grace, it is of mighty importance for us to ascertain, whether we have closed with God on the terms of His own covenant, and thus have been

made partakers of this grace, and whether its reign has been established in our hearts. And we cannot refer the reader, who is in earnest about his salvation, to any Treatise better fitted than that of Abraham Booth, to give him sure and satisfying evidences for ascertaining the soundness and security of his hopes for eternity. He presents grace, as reigning through Jesus Christ unto eternal life, to sinners; and he invites the chief of sinners, by putting faith in the testimony of God, to lay hold of the offered grace, and thus appropriate to themselves the blessings of pardon, and peace, and justification, which God has provided through the atonement and righteousness of Christ; and which, in the proclamations of the gospel, are freely and unreservedly offered to all who will. On this, the alone warrant of faith, he invites all to enter into peace and reconciliation with God, and by judging Him faithful who hath promised, to enjoy the blessedness of the man whose sins are covered, and to whom the Lord does not impute transgression.

But, while faith in the free grace and offered pardon of the gospel puts peace and joy into the heart of the believer, it is no less fitted to produce purity and holiness. This, indeed is the tendency, as well as the main and ultimate design of the gospel, and it is on this account that we estimate so highly the Treatise we are now recommending, that it so nobly vindicates the doctrines of grace as doctrines according to godliness. And if there is any portion of this work to which, more than another, we would particularly direct the attention of our readers, it is to those chapters "On Grace as it reigns in our

Sanctification," and "On the Necessity of Holiness and good Works." There is, in the minds of many, a fancied alliance between free grace and an immunity to sin; that, since pardon is the free gift of God, through the blood of the atonement, there is no restraint laid on men's inclinations to sin—that since we are justified wholly by the righteousness of another, the necessity of personal righteousness is as wholly superseded—and that since we cannot earn heaven by our own obedience, all the motives and securities for obedience are removed. We have not room to attempt an exposure of this oft-repeated, but unfounded, assertion—an assertion, to which the clearest averments of Scripture, and the experience of every true believer, give the most triumphant refutation. And we count it unnecessary to enter into any defence of the doctrines of grace from the charge of licentiousness, after the able and unanswerable vindication which the present Volume furnishes. We do not indeed deny, that many professors of the gospel give some colour for such an impeachment, by profaning that holy name by which they are called, and by failing to adorn the doctrines of grace by lives and conversations becoming the gospel; but such men have never felt the *reign of grace* in their hearts, otherwise it would not have failed to teach them "to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world;" and, while such men repose a fancied confidence in the death of Christ, as their deliverance from condemnation and as their passport to heaven, they have utterly mistaken one of the main designs of

Christ's death, which was, "to deliver us from all iniquity, and to purify us unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." If heaven consists in God's manifesting the spiritual glories of His holy and perfect character, then must our spirit and character be kindred to His own, before we can delight in the love and contemplation of such glory. To love and enjoy God, we must be like God. And they utterly mistake the design of the gospel, who conceive of it as a mere act of indemnity; and the gospel has not been believed by them at all, if it has not come to them in the power and beneficence of holiness and grace, to change their hearts and affections into the love of what is holy and righteous and excellent; nor can they entertain any well-founded hopes of heaven hereafter, in whom there is no process of restoration going on at present to the lost image of the Godhead, and in whose hearts grace is not exerting its reigning power, to assimilate them to the spirit and character of God.

Whatever there may be now, in the days of Paul, at least, there were men who turned the grace of God into licentiousness, and who ranked among the privileges of the gospel an immunity for sin. And it is striking to observe the effect of this corruption on the mind of the apostle;—that he who braved all the terrors of persecuting violence, that he who stood undismayed before kings and governors, and could lift his intrepid testimony in the hearing of an enraged multitude—that he who, when bound by a chain between two soldiers, still sustained an invincible constancy of spirit, and could live in fearlessness, and triumph, with

the dark imagery of an approaching execution in his eye—that he who counted not his life dear unto him, and whose manly breast bore him up amidst all the threats of human tyranny, and the grim apparatus of martyrdom—that this man so firm and so undaunted, wept like a child when he heard of those disciples that turned the pardon of the cross into an encouragement for doing evil. The fiercest hostilities of the gospel's open enemies he could brave, but when he heard of the foul dishonour done to the name of his Master, by the moral worthlessness of those who were the gospel's professing friends, this he could not bear—all that firmness, which so upheld him unfaltering and unappalled in the battles of the faith, forsook him then; and this noblest of champions on the field of conflict and of controversy, when he heard of the profligacy of his own converts, was fairly overcome by the tidings, and gave way to all the softness of womanhood. When every other argument fails, for keeping us on the path of integrity and holiness, we should think of the argument of Paul in tears. It may be truly termed a picturesque argument, nor are we aware of a more impressive testimony in the whole compass of Scripture, to the indispensable need of virtue and moral goodness in a believer, than is to be found in that passage where Paul says of these unworthy professors of the faith, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

TO

SERIOUS REFLECTIONS ON TIME AND ETERNITY.

BY JOHN SHOWER.

AND

ON THE CONSIDERATION OF OUR LATTER END,

AND OTHER CONTEMPLATIONS.

BY SIR MATTHEW HALE, KNT.

THERE are certain truths, which lie remote from all direct and immediate observation—and which require more than one step on the part of the human mind, ere they are arrived at—which can only, in fact, be reached by a reasoning process, that consists of many steps; and for the describing of which, the habit of sustained attention, and the talent of sound and legitimate inference, and the power of combining principles which are known, and thence eliciting a truth or a doctrine that was unknown, must all be summoned to the work, and be put into strenuous and continued exercise for days, or often for months together, ere the toils of the devoted inquirer be rewarded by the discovery that he is in quest of. There is much, for example, both of mathematical and political science, which is incontrovertibly true, but which, instead

of being taken up at one act by the understanding, as if it lay on the very surface of contemplation, can only be grasped into the possession of the mind, by being travelled to through a long intermedium of many transitions and many arguments—and they are only a gifted few who can bear the fatigues of such a journey, and to whom the labours of the midnight oil afford a congenial and much-loved employment, and who have had their intellectual powers disciplined to the march of a logical or lengthened investigation. The Smith of the one science, and the Newton of the other, afford very striking illustrations of this kind of mental superiority over the rest of the species—and in virtue of which they were enabled to discover what before to the whole of mankind was utterly unknown; and in virtue of which their followers are enabled to see what the majority of mankind do not see. It is only seen in fact from a summit of demonstration—and this is only attained by a series of ascending movements—and the few who have made their way to the temple which stands upon such an eminence as this, find inscribed upon it "the temple of philosophy." Now, what we maintain is, that this is altogether distinct from "the temple of wisdom." Its successful worshippers are men of reach and men of acquirement, and men who, from the elevation they have won, and on which they have posted themselves, can command a farther prospect over some walk, or some domain of the great intellectual territory, than their fellows around them. And yet they are not on this account men of wisdom, nor have we arrived at the

true meaning and application of this epithet, if we either think that to be wise we must be philosophers, or that, if philosophers, we are therefore wise.

There are certain other truths, difficult of access, which are distinct, and distinguishable we think from those that we have just now adverted to—not such as are gained by a continuous effort along a line of investigation—not such as come in view upon the eye of the beholder, after he has scaled one of the altitudes of science—not such as lie remote, by being placed at a distance, but such rather as lie hidden from common minds, because deeply enveloped under the surface of common observation. To come at these, is not to plod and to persevere from one acquisition to another, as in the former instances. It is done by a process perhaps, too, in which all the elements of ratiocination are concerned, but a process so rapid, as to be felt even by the owner of the mind through which it passes, like an act of momentary intuition. Such is the quickness of his penetrating eye, that what to others is a thick and impalpable veil, hides not from him the truth or the principle which lurks beneath it—and with one glance of perception, can he discern many of the secret things which lie under the broad and ostensible face of human affairs—and this faculty of his though certainly sharpened by cultivation, and cradled up to its present maturity among the varieties of experience and of life, is not of slow operation like the former, but is sudden in all its exercises, and quite immediate in all the information which it fetches to its owner. One of its main offices is to detect what is latent, and to

ordinary minds, inaccessible in the character of man. This it does not by any tardy movement of the understanding, but by something like the tact of an instantaneous discernment, by the look of an instinctive sagacity, directed towards any exhibition either in the countenance or in the conduct of another. It is this faculty which gives the eye of a lynx to the satirist; and which endues, with all his readiness and address, the wily ambassador, who, himself unseen, can cast a piercing intelligence through all the windings and intrigues of a cabinet; and which dexterously guides its possessor's way among the politics of a city corporation; and which even achieves, as wondrous triumphs as any of subtlety and skill among the severest collisions, or the low jockeyship of a market. It is far more diffused than science and scholarship are through the various ranks of society. You will meet with it in the homeliest walks of life—nay, sometimes, in all its perfection, under the guise, and in the attitude, of a country simpleton. It is not confined to the chicanery of courts. For the play of as deep and as dexterous artifice may be set agoing in the negotiations of private interest, as has ever been recorded in the annals of diplomacy. And whether it be swindling without the law, or swindling within the law, may there be the same over-reach of one shrewder understanding over the blind and unsuspecting confidence of another, in the contests of ordinary trade, as in the contests of politics. The man who is thus gifted, sees deeper than his fellows. He can read the vanity, or the weakness, or the delicacy which are

in another's heart, and he can practise accordingly. It is true, that he may be thus wise as a serpent, and yet harmless as a dove. But the mere wisdom of the serpent is not true wisdom, in the soundest acceptation of the term. The epithet wise, according to its largest and its soundest acceptation, is neither exemplified by him, who, by dint of meditation, sees farthest into the secrets of philosophy, or who, by dint of shrewd and oft-repeated observation, sees deepest into the mysteries of our nature—nor have we yet reached the conception of a truly wise man, if we think, that to be wise we must be political, or, that if political, we are therefore wise.

The consideration of our latter end, which forms the principal topic of the following Volume, is that which the Scripture affirms to be true wisdom. "Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they considered their latter end." But the truth of our mortality, by the considering of which aright we are wise, belongs neither to the former, nor to the latter classification. We do not need to travel far in quest of its discovery. Neither do we need to dive among the recesses of a profound observation, that we may be able to fetch it up, and to appropriate it. It is a truth which, on the very highway of ordinary life, forces itself on the recognition of every man. That world, through which we are all journeying, abounds in the sign-posts of mortality; and many is the passing funeral which obtrudes this lesson upon our eyes; and many are the notes of that funeral bell which tolls it upon our hearing;—and well may the old, when they

think of a former generation, levelled and taken off by the hand of death, learn how sure it is, that the living and busy society around them will at length be swept away;—and even to the young, and those the likeliest of us all, does death hang out its memorials, and gives them to know that it wields an indiscriminating arm;—and even from those whom it spares the longest, and comes to the last, may we learn how short a process of arithmetic it is which conducts every one of us to our latter end, —and thus, through all the possible avenues of sense, and experience, and feeling, do such intimations multiply upon us, and these so plain and so powerful, and ever and anon recurring with such pathos and in such frequency, that, but to those who are sunk in idiotism, is it a lesson read and recognised of all men. Nor is there a living man who does not know, that the march of our actual generation is but one vast progressive movement to the grave. It is not the acquirement of new truths, but the right use and consideration of old ones, which constitutes wisdom. It is not the discovery of what was before unknown, which signalizes the wise man above his fellows. It is the right and the rational application of what they know as well as he, but which they do not reflect upon, and do not proceed upon as he. It is not the man who outpeers his acquaintances in intellectual wealth, neither is it the man who outdoes them in homebred sagacity—it is neither the one nor the other, who, in the best, and most significant sense of the term, is the man of wisdom. It is he, who acts upon the sureness of that which is sure.

It is he, who proceeds upon the reality of that which is real. It is he, who feels greatness of desire after that which is great, and smallness of desire after that which is small, and shapes his doings to the actual dimensions of every object which is presented to his understanding. And neither is it necessary that, in respect of understanding, he should have a capacity for more than truths which are familiar to all, and are acknowledged of all. He has not to go in quest of strange or distant novelties, but only to trace to its right purpose that which is near to him, and within reach of every man. In a word, he has not to learn that which is known only to a few, he has only to consider that which is known to all. "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would *consider* their latter end!" He has not to be taught the number of his days, but taught *so* to number them, as to apply his heart unto wisdom.

He is not in the soundest physical condition, who lives on the high-wrought delicacies of an artificial and expensive preparation; but he, the organs of whose bodily constitution are best suited to the bread and the water, and the universal aliments which nature has provided for the healthful sustenance of her children. And he is neither in the best spiritual, nor even in the best intellectual condition, the faculties of whose soul are ever on the stretch after lofty and recondite doctrine, or its appetite for knowledge pre-occupied with various and exquisite speculation—but he, who thrives on the daily nourishment of such truth as is familiar to all—he, whose clear and vigorous eye admits

most copiously of that light, which is poured around the orbit—he, the food of whose understanding is that common food which is most abundant, and would also be most salutary, but for the common disease that overspreads the families of our species —he who, with no taste, and no capacity for what is remote or ingenious, rightly comprehends the truth that is at hand, and goes not beyond the simple elements of being in any of his mental exercises, but who, if right in these, has reached a wisdom which philosophy cannot reach, and who, if sound in his practical estimate of what is due to Time, and what is due to Eternity, is a man of nobler aims, and far more solid and exalted wisdom, than science can induce upon any of its votaries. He lives not upon the niceties, but upon the staple of spiritual fare, and his spiritual frame is thereby upheld in strength and in prosperity; and in the plain certainties of the coming death, and the coming judgment, does he walk in a way more truly elevated, than that which is trodden by any son of literary ambition: and hence the impress of dignity and wisdom which we have seen to sit on the aspect of him, who, the father of a cottage family, has no respite from toil but Sabbath, and no reading but his much-read Bible, and that authorship, of old and humble piety, which lies in little room upon his shelves. To learn discriminatively and justly what wisdom is, you have just to place the most brilliant and accomplished philosopher by the side of this venerable sage of Christianity. The one knows much, but his is a knowledge which terminates in itself. The other knows little, but

his is a knowledge which is turned to the purpose of his guidance here, and of his provision for eternity hereafter. Wisdom is not bare knowledge. It is knowledge directed to its best and fittest, and most productive application. Thus it is, that there may be much knowledge without wisdom, and there may be much wisdom with little knowledge. It is not he who knows most, who is most wise, but he, who uses aright that which is known and familiar to all men. For, let it be observed, that it is with spiritual as with natural food. The most useful ingredients of it are the most abundant. Men may refuse to partake of them, and starve and die, and thus become, what the majority of our species actually are—dead in trespasses and sins. To bring a man alive again from the apparent death of nature, we never think of wooing back the departed senses by the offer of luxuries. But we admit a supply of air, and try if he can breathe in this universal element; and make use of cold water, which is to be had in every dwelling-place; and ply his taste with some simple preparation; and could we restore him to the common enjoyment of these very commonest articles, we would be satisfied. And so it is in the case of spiritual torpor. To call it back to sensibility, we would never think of elaborate demonstration. But we would ring into our patient's ear the message of death, which every body knows, but few know with application. We would try to awaken his inner man, by the tidings of its immortality, which all profess to have faith in, while scarcely any human being lives under the power of it. We

would sound the trump of alarm, and loudly speak of an angry God and a coming vengeance, notes as familiar to his hearing as is that of the wind of heaven which blows over him, while, in their terror and in their urgency, they are as unfelt by the soul, as if its ears of communication with a human voice were altogether closed. We would deal forth upon him the simplicities of the gospel—and tell of sin and of the Sacrifice—intimations which may be as readily taken up by the peasant as by the philosopher—but which, until roused from their carnal lethargy, are alike unheeded by them both. To recall them from such a paralysis as this, we would not ply them with that which is severe and elaborate, but would, if possible, quicken and revive them by that which is elementary. And not he who is led on by argument to that which is remote, but he who receives the touch of a quickening influence from that, the certainty of which is obvious to all, while the sense of it is nearly unfelt by all—he it is who hath attained the only true understanding—he it is who is wise unto salvation.

We cannot but perceive, how, while the doctrines of our faith are plain, in opposition to what is recondite, not requiring, like the difficulties of science, a prolonged and strenuous investigation—yet still, plain as they are, they need the influence of the Spirit for the true understanding of them, just as a dead body needs the touch of some miraculous personage, ere it can breathe the all-encompassing atmosphere, or use the universal elements, or be sustained by the common bounties of nature. And so of the soul. It is not by con-

ducting it through any lengthened, or logical demonstration of the schools, that we restore it to that intelligence, the possession of which assures the possessor of life everlasting. It is by visiting it with the manifestation of certain great and impending, but withal simple realities. The wisdom which is thus gotten, is altogether distinct from the wisdom of philosophy—hidden in fact from many such wise, and many such prudent, and revealed unto babes.

Let us just look to the practical habit of nature, and see that, in the face of the clearest and plainest arithmetic, it gives a superiority to the present over the future world, and then may we acknowledge, that if it be needful to heal the diseased eyes of the blind, ere they can see of the common light, or to heal the diseased lungs of the consumptive, ere they can breathe aright of the common air, or to heal the diseased constitution of the sickly, ere they can turn into aliment the common food of all men,—so is it equally needful that a physician's hand be laid upon our diseased spirits, ere they be nourished by truths so palpable, as that eternity is greater than time, and the enjoyment of God in heaven, greater than that of all those earthly blessings which he causes to descend on our fleeting pilgrimage.

We know not on whom it is, that the burden of this sore disease still lies, in all its native aggravation, or from whom it has been taken away. We can only address our admonitions to the reader at a venture. It is like the shooting of an arrow among a multitude, when who knows what individual will be struck by it? It is under the declaration of the truth, that a child of darkness

becomes a child and a disciple of light. But even the same truth which awakens the former, is the very truth which needs to be repeated, again and again, in the hearing of the latter, to keep him awake. The pure mind must be stirred up in the way of remembrance. And it is not enough that truth be received at the first; in the language of the Bible, it must also be considered. The food which is taken in is of no use, unless, by a digestive process, it be turned into aliment. Truth is the food of the soul. We receive it by faith. But if we keep it not in memory, we, in the words of the apostle, have believed in vain. The shortness of life, and the certainty of its approaching extinction, may come upon the spirit in a powerful, but momentary visitation. This gleam of light must be brightened, and sustained, and perpetuated. It must be kept alive amid the shock of many rude and adverse elements. It must shine as a lamp upon all our paths. The converse of this world's companies should not darken it. The heat and the hurry of our daily business should not stifle it. That sorrow which worketh death, should not swallow it up into the oblivion of our immortality, nor should the still more dangerous gale of prosperity blow this pure and sacred flame into utter annihilation. It is not enough that we acknowledge the truth at stated times; we must give earnest heed to it, lest *at any time* we should let it slip. It is not enough that we should know our latter end—nor has our understanding of this been advanced into true wisdom, till it be our care and our habit to consider our latter end.

The practical habit of our souls ought to be a habit of anticipation, and of anticipation reaching even unto death, and to the immortality which lies beyond it. A realizing sense of what that is, which a coming futurity is to bring with speed, and perhaps with suddenness, to our doors, would change the habit and posture of the soul altogether. Could we only figure to our imaginations the ebbing, and the quivering, and the agony of death, and then charge ourselves with the certainty that death is coming,—could we be ever looking onwards to the day when the last trumpet shall call us from our graves to the judgment-seat, and give a settled home in our bosoms to the truth of this awful revelation, that judgment is coming,—could we carry our frequent and daily thoughts to the margin of eternity, and, after contrasting the delight and the dreariness of its two immeasurable regions, with the interests of that short-lived day which separates the morning from the evening of our existence in the world, consider how surely, on the rapid wing of succession, eternity is coming, —and simple as these ponderings are, let them just enter with the power which they ought, and in the new complexion which they cast on all that is intermediate between us and eternity, and they will both give us other minds, and make other men of us. These truths are plain enough for the peasant—but there is in them a challenging authority, which reaches even unto the prince. They are fit for the homeliest understandings. Yet homely as they are, may they be offered to men of all ranks, and all classes in society, and they do

look hard upon the pursuits of our existing generation. With so mighty an instrument of demonstration, as the calculus of those months that will soon pass away, and of those years that are so easily summed up, do we bring the lesson of our mortality to bear upon them. And be they the children of wealth, resting their security on that corruptible foundation, of which gold and silver are the materials,—or be they children of poverty, who think that they have lost their all, because, without a portion in time, they have cast eternity, as a thing of worthlessness, away from them,—or, in a word, be their condition what it may, let them be of that innumerable multitude who use the world not as a road, but as a residence, —we tell them that they are carnally-minded, and if not arrested on the way, they are fast posting to that death which is the doom of all who are so. Awaken, awaken, from these manifold delusions by which nature is encompassed!—and seek to be spiritually-minded, that you may have life and peace.

So closely allied is the consideration of our latter end with the very essence of wisdom, that we know not a likelier expedient for shutting us up, and that immediately, unto Christ—unto Him, who is called the wisdom of God as well as the power of God—unto Him, in comparison of the excellency of whose knowledge all was but loss, in the estimation of the apostle; insomuch, that he determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. What is it that makes us tarry in the great work of seeking a secure righteousness before God? It is because

we feel secure enough in the mean time, with the possession of health, and the enjoyment of a warm and well-sheltered home, and the engrossments of business, and the delights of a gay, and pleasing, and varied companionship. These, mixed up with a tolerable sense of our own decencies, and our own duties, serve altogether to make us easy in this evil world, and to keep off from our imaginations all that can give dread or disturbance in the thought of another world. The truth is, that in these circumstances, and with these feelings, the question, "Wherewithal shall I appear before God?" is never seriously entertained. It does not come upon the mind with the urgency of a matter in hand,—and, in reference to the undoubted fact, that the most earthly men are also the most inimical to that doctrine which affirms the ground of our evangelical acceptance before God, we believe the secret but substantial explanation of the whole matter to be, that the soul which keeps a firm hold upon time, is careless and thoughtless about the goodness of its foundation for eternity. He likes this world best, and if he make good a portion here, he will not trouble himself with any nice or scrupulous examination of what that is, which makes the best title-deed for an inheritance hereafter. And this will explain a fact which we think must be familiar to many—the very summary process upon which a man of the world comes to his easy and agreeable conclusion on the question of his eternity—the very comfortable balance which he strikes between his good points and his bad ones—so as to set aside all his sins from the final result

of this computation, and bring into view nothing but his humanities and his virtues, on which to rear a confidence before God. It is not by fully tracing, but, in the language of parliament, by blinking the question, that he comes to a deliverance which is satisfying enough to his mind about the world at a distance, amid so much to satisfy him, in the visible and surrounding world with which he has presently to do. It makes all the difference, between the earnestness of our preparation to meet the creditor, who threatens instant diligence upon our person, and the creditor whose application for payment we can, by an act of the fancy, put off, and postpone to an indefinite distance away from us. And next time you see a thriving, prosperous, good-humoured man of the world evince his hatred of the doctrine of faith, and of all that is said about acceptance in Christ, and a right basis of justification before the eye of the Lawgiver—before you admit the soundness of his notions about a safe and sufficient passport to eternity—consider well whether eternity be at all a matter of concern with him—and whether it is not the entertainment of sense which gives him all his delight, and the business of sense which gives him all his occupation.

Now, conceive the two elements of eternity and time to be so revealed to his soul, as to stand in their just and naked proportion before him. Conceive, that the one is seen advancing in nearness and magnitude towards him, and the other as fast flitting into evanescence away. Conceive the scales so to fall from his eyes, that, through all the delusions which the god of this world spreads over the surface of

what is present and visible, he beholds the impressive mockery which death stamps upon every enjoyment that is on this side of it; and feels, that if he fall short of the enjoyment which is on the other side of it, he is undone. Let all this be only mixed up with a right sense of sin and of the Saviour—and not one moment will intervene, ere, under the curse and consciousness of the one, he seeks for deliverance from the other. Let him thus be made to hear the footsteps of the last messenger—and he will feel all the urgency of a present claim and of a present creditor at his door; and he will be driven to the necessity of a present settlement, and he will not be so easily set at rest about the footing upon which he stands. His search for securities, will be the search of a man in earnest; and a real practical earnestness is all that we require—assured, as we are, that the man who is truly seeking for a foundation, will not be satisfied till he finds a solid one; and that out of the frail materials of human virtue no such foundation can be formed; and that an obedience, rendered without heart, and mixed up with all the infirmities both of forgetfulness and pollution, will never quiet the conscience of him who has at all been visited by a realizing sense of these things. Thus it is, that to consider our latter end is to tread on one of the likeliest pathways to the Saviour. Nor do we know a more effectual way of being prompted forward to that place of refuge—where we shall find a blood to wash away our guilt, and a righteousness that can never fail us. So that, could we only demonstrate with power, how short-lived the period, and how totter-

ing the basis of all earthly enjoyments, we should not despair of soon finding the alarmed sinner within his secure resting-place, on that foundation which God hath laid in Zion.

There is often, in the pencilled descriptions of the moralist, a kind of poetical and high-wrought imagery thrown around the chamber of death; and that, whether it be the terrors of guilt, or the triumphs of conscious virtue, which are conceived to mark this closing scene of our history in the world. It is well to know what the plain and experimental truth is, upon the subject. In the case of a worldly and alienated life, the remorse is not nearly so pungent, the apprehensions not nearly so vivid and terrifying, the impression of future and eternal realities not nearly so overpowering, as we are apt to fancy upon such an occasion. The truth is, that as it was throughout the whole of his living, so it is generally in dying. He is still engrossed with present and sensible things; and there is positively nothing in the mere approach of dissolution that can raise up the ascendancy of faith, or render him less the slave of sight, and of the body, than he was before. There is the present pain, there is the present thirst, there is the present breathlessness; and if, amid the tumults of his earthly fabric giving way, and the last irregular movements of its deranged mechanism fast drawing to their cessation, he send for the minister to soothe him by his prayers, even he forms but one of the present varieties. There is no actual going forth of the patient's mind towards the things which are above. The faith which he has so long shut out, does not now force

its entrance into a bosom, habituated to the reception of no other influences, than what the world, and the things of the world, have so long exercised over him. We may see torpor upon such an occasion, and call it serenity. We may witness an uncomplaining silence, and call it resignation. We may never hear one note of alarm to drop from the lips of the dying sufferer; and therefore say that he met with Christian fortitude his end. But all these may meet upon a death-bed; and yet, the positive confidence of looking forward to heaven as a home, a positive rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God, a believing, and a knowing, that "when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, they shall have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," may never enter his bosom. There may be the peacefulness of insensibility, even while the life of him who has been a stranger to the faith of the gospel is waning to its extinction—but a peace mixed up with the elevation of such prospects as these, is never felt, apart from the thought of Christ as "the Lord our righteousness." It is altogether a romance to talk of such anticipations of triumph, to him who looks back upon his own obedience, and then looks forward to his rightful and his challenged reward. If we want our dying hour to have the radiance of heaven's gate thrown over it—if we want, amid the failure of expiring nature, to have some firm footing, on which we might strongly and securely rest; there is positively none other, but that to which the consideration of our latter end should *now* be urging us

forward—and, therefore, should we call upon ourselves *now* to take up with Christ as our foundation, and to associate all our confidence in God, with the obedience which he has wrought, with the ransom which he has rendered.

We cannot better enforce these solemn considerations on the minds of our readers, with the view of shutting them up to the faith that is in Christ, than by referring them to SHOWER'S "Serious Reflections on Time and Eternity," and Sir MATTHEW HALE "On the consideration of our Latter End." In SHOWER'S excellent Treatise, they will find the serious reflections of a mind, which, by the habit of solemn consideration, and the exercise of a vigorous faith, habitually felt the power and the reality of those important truths, respecting which mankind in general maintain an obstinate, and almost incurable heedlessness. There is scarcely any form of words, or any mode of computation, or any point of contrast, which he has not employed, to give the reader a vivid and substantive impression of the littleness of Time, and the greatness of Eternity. The truths on which he insists, are truths of the plainest and most elementary kind; but thoroughly aware that the practical consideration of them constitutes the essence of true wisdom, he endeavours, by the most forcible arguments, and the most touching appeals, and the most persuasive earnestness, to arrest mankind in their career of thoughtlessness and unconcern, and to turn their resolute and sustained attention to the consideration of their latter end, and so to number their days, that they may

apply their hearts to that highest of all wisdom—a preparation for the coming eternity; and with the real and tender solicitude of men in earnest, lay to heart those things which pertain to their everlasting peace, ere time be hid from their eyes.

The "Consideration of our Latter End," and the other kindred pieces of Sir MATTHEW HALE, are not only marked by the same solemn earnestness, but possess all that graphic power of thought, and depth of experimental feeling, which characterize the writings of this extraordinary man. The character and writings of this great and good man have already been adverted to in a former Essay in this series of "Select Christian Authors,"* which precludes the necessity of our entering into any farther exposition of them. But we cannot help observing, that if Sir MATTHEW HALE, whose genius and learning rendered him one of the most distinguished ornaments of his age, and whose character and wisdom still associate him in England's best remembrances, with the noblest of her worthies, counted it a wisdom superior to all human learning, to consider his latter end—and if, amidst the numerous and important avocations of that high official station which he occupied, rendered still more arduous and difficult, by the anarchy and confusion of that revolutionary period in which he lived, this good man was not unmindful to address those monitory lessons to his countrymen, which we now present anew, as salutary admonitions to the

* Judge Hale on the Knowledge of Christ Crucified, and other Divine Contemplations, with an Introductory Essay, by the Rev. David Young.

present generation,—then have we a testimony to the worth and surpassing excellence of this wisdom, above all the acquisitions of science and philosophy, which cannot be disregarded, without incurring the imputation of folly. Science and human learning we hold in high estimation, and let them be diffused throughout every corner of our land; but what we affirm is, that they do not meet the necessities of man's moral constitution. The man of science may be rich in all these acquisitions, and yet be destitute of that knowledge which forms a right preparation for the duties of time, or a sound preparation for the glories of eternity, while the humble peasant, whose mind has never been illumined with science, may be illustrious in wisdom of a far higher order, and, by turning the consideration of his latter end to its right and practical use, may have attained to that knowledge in which the apostle determined alone to glory, "the knowledge of Jesus Christ and him crucified."

It is the great design of such a consideration, to lead us to that gospel which is freely offered to all. But though the gospel be offered freely, it only becomes ours by our receiving it freely; and seldom is it so received by him who, after being laid on the bed of his last sickness, has still a Saviour to seek, instead of a Saviour to enjoy. The evil heart of unbelief, which he has cherished through life, cleaves to him, and keeps its hold till the last hour of it; and, therefore, never does the mind entertain a delusion more ruinous, never is eternity placed on a more desperate stake, than by those who put away from them *now* the offers of

salvation, and think that *then* they shall have it for the taking. It is the part, then, of all to look forthwith and earnestly to the Saviour—to contemplate him in his revealed offices—to make a real and intelligent work of closing with him—to receive him as their atonement—to render allegiance to him as their Lord and their Proprietor—and submit themselves unto Him, that he might rule in them by his Spirit, and over them by his Law. Whether they be the unconverted, who have yet to lay hold of Christ, or the already converted, whose business it is to keep that hold—we know not how the consideration of their latter end can be turned more substantially to the purposes of wisdom and of true understanding, than by leading them supremely to prize, and immediately to acquire, that knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord, which is life everlasting.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

TO THE

CHRISTIAN'S DEFENCE AGAINST INFIDELITY.

CONSISTING OF,

1. LESLIE'S SHORT AND EASY METHOD WITH THE DEISTS.
2. LYTTLETON'S OBSERVATIONS ON ST. PAUL.
3. DODDRIDGE'S EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.
4. BATES ON THE DIVINITY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.
5. OWEN ON THE SELF-EVIDENCING LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE.
6. BAXTER ON THE DANGER OF MAKING LIGHT OF CHRIST.

THERE are several ways in which a man, who practises the art of divination, might try to make good his pretensions to this supernatural endowment. He might do so by attempting to pronounce on the kind and the quantity of money which I have about my person. He might pass a confident utterance on a matter that is hidden from every human eye but my own, even on the number and the character of those pieces of coin which I am carrying about with me,—and this description of his may be rigidly true, in all its varied particulars, —and at different times may he make distinct and repeated trials of the same kind, and succeed in every one of them. And surely it is conceivable, that these examples of an unfailing coincidence, between what he says, and what I myself know of the subject, may be so striking, and so multiplied, and so obviously free of all the symptoms and all the

preparations of jugglery, as to leave upon my mind, not merely a firm, but also a most just and rational conviction, that the man is what he pretends to be; that there is a reach of discernment about him, beyond all that is known of the powers or the principles of nature; that in fact, he has established himself to be a miraculous personage, and by evidence, too, of such a kind, as, with a man of sober and enlightened judgment, might be altogether irresistible.

Now, it is to be remarked of such evidence, that, in the main strength of it, and in the proper and original impression of it, it is addressed exclusively to myself. I may make known to others the whole history of this wonderful transaction. I may report to them all the cases of successful divination which have been accomplished upon me. But still the evidence of these cases has to pass through the intervening medium of my testimony. Before that others can feel the same power of evidence with myself, they must be made to undergo the same treatment; or the same divination must be practised successively and individually upon each of them. They may choose to discredit my testimony. They may distrust my powers of memory and observation. They may suspect a collusion between me and an artful pretender. They may look upon me as a man either of dishonest purpose, or of diseased imagination. They may muster up a thousand possibilities, to ward away from them a conviction, which I know and am assured to be a just one. And thus it is that I may, on the one hand, be surrounded by the incredulity of all my

fellows, and I may be assailed, in every direction, by the imputations of falsehood or fanaticism; and yet, with the personal access I have had to an evidence to which none of my acquaintances have been admitted, and with a proper confidence in the soundness of my own recollections, and with the sense of a single-minded integrity throughout the whole of this business, I may, on the other hand, though accosted at every turn by the ridicule and the reproaches of my acquaintances, be fully warranted to place my immoveable confidence in him with whom I have held the intercourse of all these intimate and peculiar communications.

But let us now vary the supposition, and conceive that our extraordinary personage embarks his pretensions on another and a higher species of divination; that, instead of attempting to divine the money which is in my pocket, he attempts to divine the thoughts which are in my heart; that, laying claim to the wondrous prerogative of supernaturally knowing what is in man, he offers to scrutinize my mind, and to read to me the varied characters which, in the shape of opinion, and desire, and ruling passion, and prevailing infirmity of temper, stand engraven in its chamber of imagery; that he unfolds to me the workings of my own soul, and lays before me a picture of the inner man, that can be vividly recognised by the eye of my own conscience; that he proves to me, how this little world of self, with all its affections and its tendencies, which stand so hidden from general observation, by a thick and an impalpable veil, is altogether naked and open before him; that he makes

me perceive, by his insight into the thoughts and intents of my heart, how he is indeed a most skilful and a most enlightened discerner; that, by his piercing inspection into the secrecies of my bosom, he can so divide asunder my soul and spirit, as to make every one of them manifest in his sight. Why, is it not conceivable, that in this way, too, there may be multiplied upon me the instances of a penetration far above the powers of humanity; that every new case of such a divination may serve to strengthen my confidence in him who performs it; and that, at length, I may be so overpowered by the evidence which he thus brings to bear upon me, as to give my full consent to all his pretensions, and to embark my every prospect, and my every determination, on his authority, as a messenger from God?

And yet, when I do so, I do it upon the strength of evidence, directed individually to myself. I cannot make another man the partaker of this evidence. I cannot possibly put him upon that station of advantage which I occupy. I cannot translate into his bosom my own direct and immediate consciousness of the movements which are going on in my bosom; nor can I furnish him with a window of observation, through which he may note the coincidence between those divinations which have been attempted on my mind, and my mind, which is the subject of these divinations. I am the only man living who can be made directly to perceive this coincidence, and to me exclusively and appropriately belongs the main strength of the evidence that is founded upon it. There lies an impassable barrier between me

and my next door neighbour, in virtue of which I find it impossible to make a full or an adequate communication of this evidence to him. There may be divinations conceived, where the subject of them is equally accessible to all men. But the peculiarity of the divination that I am now insisting on, is, that the subject of it is accessible only to the individual on whom it is practised. Ere my neighbour can possess the evidence which it affords, he must be made the subject of a distinct divination. Before this takes place, he has nothing to rest upon but my testimony, which he may reject as false, or which he may deride as fanciful, or which he may utterly despise, as symptomatic of folly and of superstitious weakness. Still, however, in the face of all this, I may obstinately adhere to my own conviction, and be right in doing so. My contemptuous neighbour has no access to the materials upon which my judgment is founded. He cannot bring himself into a state of contiguity with my mind, nor obtain such a view of its workings, as to see how good the evidence is that I have for my conviction; nor, until he has forced his way within the penetralia of the inner chamber, will I, with a right sense of my integrity, and a right confidence in my judgment, hold him entitled to pronounce it a bad evidence. I alone have access to the depositions of my own consciousness. And I have faith in their veracity. And I can judge of the accordancy between them, and the divinations of the man who calls himself a prophet. And I may see it to be an accordancy so close, and so minutely variegated, and so often

exemplified, and so sustained throughout all the successions of my experience and my history, that, believing it to be miraculous, I may say, and say with justness, that surely God is in him of a truth. And thus may I exhibit, not merely an inflexible, but a sound and philosophically consistent faith, even in circumstances where, abandoned by the sympathy of all my fellows, I am traduced as a hypocrite, or reviled as an enthusiast.

There is something to confirm all this in Scripture history. Our Saviour, in the course of His conversation with the woman of Samaria, achieved upon her a work of divination. He read to her a passage out of her present and her by-gone history; and she was so far impressed with the circumstance, as to say, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." She repeated the circumstance to her countrymen; and it is recorded, that some of them bore such respect to her testimony, that they believed on Jesus, "for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did." But though some, not all; for it is further said, that "many more believed because of his own word." True, it is not said that this word carried the same kind of evidence to them, that it did to the woman of Samaria. It is not said, that, disbelieving her testimony, they were at length made to believe, by means of a similar divination practised upon themselves. But we may, at least, gather from the passage, that the evidence on which their faith rested did not lie in any external miracle. This is not what they alleged as the ground of their faith. But they "said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have

heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

But any deficiency of information in this passage, is amply made up in other passages. The miracle of tongues, for instance, held out to the notice of the world, by the first teachers of Christianity, should have compelled the attention of all whom they addressed, to the subject-matter of their testimony. A few moments of serious and candid examination, would have convinced them of such a reality in this exhibition, as entitled the first preachers of the gospel to a further and a respectful hearing. But there were many in those days who wanted this seriousness and this candour; and they passed a rejection so summary upon the message that was proposed, that they would not even listen to the terms of it; and they put it away from them at the very threshold of its earliest intimations; and we are, accordingly, told by the apostle, that the gift of tongues, instead of exciting their inquiry, excited their ridicule, insomuch, that they pronounced those who exercised it, to be mad; and we also read of certain despisers, who, upon the very same exhibition, said, mocking, that "these men are full of new wine;" and thus it is that they persisted in their unbelief, and wondered, and perished. Now, the way in which we understand the gift of tongues to have been a sign unto them, is, that it sealed their condemnation. It convicted them of a dishonest partiality on the side of falsehood. It made the gospel the savour of death unto death unto them. The sign of tongues was a sign which they spake against; and this wilful,

perverse, unfair, and, at all hazards, determined opposition, drew upon them the fulfilment of such sayings, as, that unless those works had been done among them which had never been done before, they had not had sin; and that it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for those who witnessed such miracles, but who so loved the darkness rather than the light, as to resist the impression of them.

Thus much for those who believed not. And as to those who believed, it does not appear to us that it was the miracle of tongues, or indeed any external miracle whatever, which wrought in them the saving faith of the New Testament. A previous miracle might, in many cases, have been the instrument by which their attention was gained: but we think that the evidence upon which their conversion hinged, beamed upon their minds from the subject-matter of the testimony. It was in the act of listening to what is called the prophecy, or, (taking this term according to its undoubted sense in many passages of Scripture,) it was in the act of listening to the exposition of Christian doctrine, that they felt the impression of that evidence which we have already insisted on—even the evidence of such a divination as was beyond all that could be accomplished by the sagacity of man. The truth of what the apostles told them was made manifest to their consciences. What their Christian teachers said they were, they felt themselves to be; and they recognised the coincidence, and they were arrested by it. They gave them credit for a supernatural commission, when they discerned such a reach of

penetration into the secrecy of their bosoms, as they judged to be supernatural. And the evidence they thus obtained, was not diluted by its transmission upon a vehicle of testimony, from the experience of one man to the hearing of another man. All who believed shared in the same experience. Each of them was made the subject of a separate divination. Each carried home the word spoken, and found it totally with all that he perceived of his own character. The evidence came with the whole force of its powerful and primitive impression upon every conscience. And we think that nothing more needs to be said, in order to understand the kind of influence by which, when the first teachers prophesied, or expounded their message and their doctrine, "and there came in one that believed not, or one unlearned, he was convinced of all, he was judged of all: and thus were the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he worshipped God, and reported that God was in them of a truth."

But these gifted teachers of our faith not only spoke to the men of their own age, they also wrote for the men of other ages. They have left behind them an enduring memorial of their doctrine and their testimony. They have graven it on an imperishable record; and we know not a more deeply interesting question, within the whole compass of Theology, than—Whether, while the word of the apostles is thus transmitted by writing, the evidence which lay in that word at its first and its oral delivery, is transmitted along with it to succeeding generations? May we, in the reading

of that word, gather the same evidence for its truth, which the unbelievers, and the unlearned in the apostolic age, did in the hearing of it? In one short sentence, Has this evidence descended? Has it been actually translated into the pages of the Bible? Does this book stand to us in the place of its human composers, who have long ere now been consigned to the silence of the grave? Can it do by itself now, what they personally, and of themselves, did then? Can it evince such a power of divination into the secrecies of the heart, as to bear, upon its own forehead, the attestation of God being in it of a truth? An unlettered man of the present day, knows nothing of its external evidence. He is an utter stranger to the erudition and the history of the eighteen hundred years which have elapsed, since the first promulgation of Christianity in the world. It is all a dark and an unknown interval to him. Nor can he fetch a single argument, for the establishment of his faith, from across an abyss which looks so obscure and so fathomless. Now the question is—May he fetch any such argument from the book itself? When, in the act of reading it, the word is brought nigh unto him, is there any thing within it by which it can announce its own authority, and hold out, to a simple and untaught reader, the light of its own evidence? Does the word written inherit all the powers of the word spoken? Does there emanate from the doctrine, as recorded by the apostles, that virtue to arrest, and to carry the conviction, which actually did emanate from the same doctrine, as told by the apostles? Insomuch, that the Bible

shall be not merely the messenger of its own contents, but shall also be the messenger of its own credentials; that wherever it goes, it shall bear abroad with it the legible and the satisfying inscription of its own truth; that by the light which beams from its pages, it shall make known the celestial character which it wears, and the celestial origin from which it sprung; that it shall emit, upon every side of it, the lesson of its rightful authority; and that, though it borrow not one particle of aid from the skill and the scholarship of its controversial defenders, it shall be able to speak for itself, to find its way even among the humblest of our cottages, to reclaim, and to convince, and to enlighten their darkest population, and to put the stamp of a sound and a clear intelligence on all the discipleship which it earns among them.

We do not see how we could have abridged our observations at any former point of this argument; and, after all, have we only arrived on the margin of a vast and untrodden field, and feel ourselves placed on the mere threshold of a subject far too big and too unwieldy for the present Essay. We will not attempt the impossibility of entertaining the question we have just now started, in such a way as to meet the every doubt, and to pursue the every illustration, and at length to bestow upon our argument its complete and conclusive establishment. We firmly believe, that there is no one position in Theology, which can be more strongly and more philosophically sustained, than the self-evidencing power of the Bible. For a full and satisfactory exposition of this subject, we must refer our readers

to Dr Owen's Treatise, in the present Volume, "On the Self-Evidencing Light and Power of the Scriptures," and all we shall do, at present, is just to bring forward as much, in the way of remark, as we have room for, on the important point which has been suggested.

When this evidence first dawns on the mind of an inquirer, there is one striking point of accordancy which generally offers itself to his contemplation; even that accordancy which subsists between the inward experience of his own heart, and the outward description of it that is laid before him in the Bible; and is, in fact, like the exact correspondence which obtains between the cipher and the thing to be deciphered. There is no one announcement which the Bible maintains more steadily, and which it keeps by more perseveringly, and which, in opposition to all the wisdom of this world, and to all the delusion and vanity of the people who live in it, is it ever holding forth more fearlessly, and more unrelentingly, than the utter alienation and worthlessness of man in reference to God. It makes the entire corruption of our species the basis of its system. It never either questions or qualifies this position; but takes it up, and proceeds upon it; and we recognise it at every turn as the great and the pervading element of Christianity. And when a man, unwarped from all the influences by which he has hitherto been blinded, looks inwardly upon himself, and perceives that it is really so,—when enabled to pierce his way through all those plausibilities of character which have hitherto lulled him into a deceitful security, he is

made to see how utterly devoid he is of what may be called the main or the elemental principle of righteousness, even a principle of allegiance to God,—when it becomes evident to him, that at the very moment that the virtues of instinct or of natural endowment, throw a lustre of moral accomplishment around him, and draw upon his person the eye and the homage of society, he is neither thinking of the God who made him, nor making His will the standard of obedience; but, with the full bent of his affections to the creature rather than to the Creator, he is in fact making the world that divinity to which he renders the incense of a perpetual offering; and withholding his heart from Him who claims the ascendancy over all its desires, and giving it up in unreserved devotedness to the idols of sense and of time. Why, when he thinks of this as the very turning point of the controversy between God and His creatures; that to do this is to trample on the authority of the first and the greatest commandment; that let him be kind or amiable, or generous or upright, there is that universal attribute of the carnal mind, even enmity against God, which spreads itself over the whole system of his feelings, and deeply infuses the very best of them with the guilt and the malignity of sin, —when he contrasts his forgetfulness of God, and his utter indifference to God, with the weight of those unnumbered obligations that he owes to Him who called him into being, and who enriched him with all his faculties, and who gives him every breath, and whose right hand upholds him continually,—when thus enabled to descry, through

the mists of a pride that is now mortified, and the false brilliancies of an imagination that is now arrested, how, with a heart withheld from God, he in fact has been carrying about with him, from the first infancy of his recollection, the very seed and principle of rebellion against his Maker,—when he comes to see all this, and, furthermore, to see how the same lesson, which his now enlightened experience is reading to him, in characters so distinct and so vigorous in his own person, stands engraven as vigorously and as distinctly on the record of Scripture; how the very thing has all along been most firmly, and in the face of this world's resistance, stated in his Bible, which is now opening upon his conviction, from the clearer view that he now takes of the lineaments of his own heart. Is it, after all this, to be looked at as a mystery, that he should proffer his respect to a volume which tells him what no other volume ever told him, but which he now sees, by his own discernment, to be true; that he should feel constrained towards that book in which he has found such an exact image of himself, as is not to be found within the whole range of human literature; or when an utterance of the Bible thus meets with its counterpart in his own bosom, and it be an utterance which nature never could have prompted, because revolting to all the pride and to all the sagacity of nature, shall he be any longer suspended in doubt or in amazement, though so convinced and so judged, and with the secrets of his heart so made manifest, his belief should at length be overpowered by this and similar instances of such a wondrous divination?

There is no room for dilating on other instances, or for describing the whole compass of Scripture, with the view of pointing out the every passage from which there glances, on the reader whose eyes have been opened, this evidence of divination. We cannot show how the very offer of such a Saviour as can alone quell the apprehensions of sinful nature, and makes the conscience feel at peace with God, is virtually in itself an act of divination —or how the distaste of nature for the truths of the gospel, a distaste asserted in the records of the gospel itself, forms another striking example of divination—or how the way in which this distaste is made to give place to a spiritual relish, and a spiritual discernment of these things, tallies with other verses of the Bible, and goes to swell and to multiply the evidences of divination—or how the actual revolution, felt by every believer whose heart is now open to the charm and the significancy of that which he at one time recoiled from in nauseous antipathy, forms an argument here of a weightier character than that of divination. We cannot venture at present on so wide a field: the evidence is in fact too abundant for it. The number of verses is too great which exhibits a harmony between the doctrines of the Bible and the findings of experience. But it may at least be remarked, that it is an evidence out of which something may be gathered to meet the case of every inquirer. For first, if he be in a state previous to conversion, this evidence accumulates upon him by every statement he finds about the deadness and the darkness, and the dread of his alienated bosom in reference

to God—and he feels it to agree with the testimony of his own conscience—and he sees in the Bible the reflection of his own most intimate experience, as it tells him that he is living without hope and without God in the world, and that a moral impotency has got hold of him, and that he cannot render, in his own strength, a spiritual obedience, and that there lies upon him the utter impossibility of conceiving love to God, whom, without the faith of the New Testament, he ever will look upon as a distant and inaccessible Lawgiver. And secondly, if he be on the eve of conversion, he finds out other points of accordancy. He looks at the gospel, and sees there what he can see no where else—a something to tranquillize the fears of guilt, to meet its necessities, to bring the sinner, who by nature stands afar off, near unto God—and as he feels this wondrous virtue of the peace-speaking blood, he believes that an application so suitable *to* man, could only proceed from Him who knew what was *in* man. And, finally, if he be already converted, this evidence strengthens upon him every day; and pours a growing light upon his path; and when he looks at his Bible, he sees that it contains within its pages an exact transcript of his own feelings and his own exercises; and as he looks at his own heart he sees the intimations of the Bible realized upon all its movements; and the points of accordancy between the outward die and the inward mould, he perceives to be far too minute and manifold and inscrutable to have been divined by the sagacity of man—and the conviction meets upon him with every new step in the progress of his history—and just

as the Christians of old believed that God was in the apostles of a truth, so does a Christian of this day believe that God is in the Bible, which the apostles have left behind them—and to the truth of this belief, all the thoughts, and all the transactions of his inner man, lend their testimony—as he feels within himself the conflict of two opposing principles, and the habitual prevalence of one of them; or as he feels within himself the faith which worketh by love, and the love which yieldeth obedience; or as he feels within himself the process of sanctification; or as he feels within himself the peace and the joy, and the spirit of adoption, which sounds to the world an unintelligible mystery; or, as he finds on his own person the fulfilment of prayer, and the fruits of the Spirit, and a growing conformity to the example of Christ, and a growing meetness for the inheritance of a blissful eternity.

But we will not oppress ourselves with the magnitude of this argument, by attempting to dispose of it, in all its parts, and in all its illustrations, within the compass of an Essay; and we shall close this part of our argument by the three following remarks:—

1. This argument, so far from precluding the testimony of the Spirit, is the very argument which the Spirit brings before us in the exercise of his legitimate functions. He tells us of nothing that is out of the field of revelation, or out of the field of human experience. The telescope does not add a single character to the distant landscape, but brings home to our discernment all the actual and antecedent characters which existed in it. In like

manner, the Spirit of God adds nothing to the word of God. He makes use of the word as His instrument. He gives us a clear view of those characters which stand engraven upon the Bible, and of those lineaments which Nature hath drawn upon our own hearts; and therefore gives us a clear view of that accordancy of divination out of which the whole of this argument emerges.

2. The evidence which is thus furnished, is, no doubt, an internal evidence; but it is altogether dissimilar from that internal evidence, which some would most presumptuously and most unphilosophically rear, as an accordancy between what they see in the Bible, and what they imagine to be the plans and the processes of the Divinity. This evidence is nearer home, more within the compass of human experience, and in every way more consonant to the cautious and solid temper of the modern philosophy, and rests exclusively on the wondrous harmony that subsists between what is seen in the Bible, and what is felt within the familiar recesses of one's own heart, and the authoritative informations of one's own consciousness.

3. It is an evidence that might be felt, in all its strength, by an unlettered workman—and he may have well warranted convictions upon the subject—and yet, from the very nature of the evidence, he may be unable to pass an adequate communication of it into another's bosom—and he may be loaded with contempt for a set of impressions which to others are utterly inexplicable: and thus it is a very possible thing, that what is called madness, may be soberness and truth—and what is branded

as Methodism, may be indeed the soundest and the most enlightened philosophy.

There is another very palpable argument for the reality of some such evidence as we have tried to illustrate, which it is impossible to overlook; and the question we have to put is, What is that evidence on which a man becomes a believer within the limits of Christendom, where the Bible is circulated? And we would appeal to the ministers of Christ, for they can speak experimentally upon this question,—tell us, amongst all the transitions you have witnessed from darkness to the marvellous light of the gospel, what the effective consideration was which accomplished such a change! Tell us, ye men whose office it is to preside over this department of human nature, who have long been conversant with the phenomena which it offers, and have doubtless treasured up in your remembrance, some cases of conversion, where the after-life of the individual stood so nobly contrasted with his by-gone history, as to attest, in characters the most decisive and undeniable, the reality of his faith! Tell us, if you have ever detected the instrumental cause of that faith—or what that was which the convert was looking to, when this principle dawned into existence—or from what quarter of contemplation the light of truth beamed upon his understanding—or where, in the whole compass of that field upon which the thoughts of man can possibly expatiate, did he meet with the charm which cleared all his doubts and all his darknesses away from him; which established his feet on a way of rectitude that he had never before walked,

and animated his bosom by that Spirit of power and of a sound mind, the workings of which he had never before experienced! O where lieth the mystery of these persuasive influences which must have gathered around him, at that point of his earthly career, when the doctrine of Christ first took an ascendancy over his judgment, and the morality of Christ shed its rich and beauteous accomplishments over his practice and conversation! Did it lie, we ask, in any thing external to the subject-matter of the testimony? or did it lie within the subject-matter of the testimony itself? Did the light lie in that history which the documents of antiquity enable you to give of the Book? or did it lie in that doctrine and information which stand engraven upon its pages? Did it lie in the exhibition you made of the proof for the communication? or did it lie in the exhibition you made of the substance of the communication? Tell us the argument of that awakening sermon under which you remember some secure hold of infidelity to have been stormed. Was it in the act of combating the hostility of literature, when, in all the pride of erudition, you did demonstrate the faithful conveyance of the Scriptures of truth from the first age of Christianity? Or was it in the act of combating the hostility of nature's blindness and nature's opposition, when you opened these Scriptures, and made the truth itself manifest to the consciences of men? This last we imagine to be the only way of converting the souls of men. It is not done by descending into the depths of the earth, and there fighting the battles of the faith

against the dark and the visioned spectres of geology. It is not done by ascending up into the heavens, and fetching down from these wondrous regions some sublime and specious illustration. It is done, by bringing the word nigh unto them —by entering with it into the warm and the well-known chambers of their own consciousness—by making them feel the full force of its adjustments to all their wants and to all their experience—by telling them of that sin, under the conviction of which nature tries to forget God, or would fly affrighted from His presence—and of that Saviour who alone can hush the alarms of nature. These are the lessons which can do to this very hour what they did in the days of the apostles. They can make the unbeliever and the unlearned feel himself to be judged of all, and convinced of all—and thus can manifest the secrets of his heart, so as that he shall acknowledge God to be in them of a truth.

And here, by the way, we cannot but remark, what a powerful argument the subject we have been illustrating furnishes in behalf of Bible and Missionary Societies. Did we propose to make our next door neighbour a believer unto life, we should feel that the most direct instrumentality we could bring to bear upon him, would be to ply his conscience with the word of the testimony. And, did we go to the neighbour beyond him, we would just do the same thing. And though, in passing from one man to another, we widen the distance from our own home, we would never think of making any change on the kind or on the method

of application, by which we tried to subdue them all unto the faith of the gospel. And in this way would we proceed till we got to the verge of Christendom—and if such be the right and the effective treatment for the last man we found within its limits, tell us, for in truth we cannot perceive it, why, on leaving him, it should not be a treatment equally right and equally effective for the very first man we meet with beyond it. How can the evidence lose its power in the transition which we make at this particular moment? What ingredient of strength has fallen away from it? What is it that the man on this side of the line has, which the man on the other side of the line has not? Neither of them is made to witness a miracle. Neither of them has heard a single word about the original vouchers for Christianity, or about the faithful transmission of its credentials along the line of many generations. Neither of them has been initiated into the scholarship of its argumentative evidence; and if you will just demand no more for the Christianization of the latter, than what you count to be enough for the Christianization of the former, it were easy to prove, that the man who is standing without has just as much to help on his discipleship as the man who is standing within. Both of them have the same mental constitution. Both are in the same state of darkness and alienation from God. Both labour under the same fears, and may have the same feeling of their moral and spiritual necessities. In a word, each of them possesses a bosom alike framed to meet, by its responding movements, the message and the

information of the New Testament. The thoughts of the one heart are as effectually reached by the word of God, which discerns and divides them asunder, as the thoughts of the other heart. And if, on the strength of these principles, we may go, by a single inch, beyond the outskirts of Christendom, on the very same principles is the whole extent of the habitable world laid open to the enterprises of Bible Societies and Christian Missionaries. There is not a human being who does not carry within him a mould of correspondence to that die which was wrought by the wisdom of God; and which is fitted to meet the case and the circumstances of all His children; and which, in fact, makes the evidence of the Bible as portable, as Bibles and teachers are portable, and which may, and therefore ought, to be carried round the globe; and should be made to traverse in every direction the wide domains of humanity, and be carried to every island and every district where men are to be found, and to circulate in full throughout all the tribes of this world's population, and to leave not so much as one straggling remnant of the species unvisited, nor to stop short in this noble enterprise, till the word of the testimony has been proclaimed among all nations, and kindreds, and families.

And if it were not so—if there was no such evidence, as that for which we are contending, by what practical avenue could the faith of the gospel be made to find an entrance and an establishment among the great mass of our *own* population? Take away from us the self-evidencing power of the Bible, and you lay an interdict on the Christi-

anity of cottages, on the Christianity of workshops, on the Christianity of crowded and industrious establishments, on the Christianity of nearly all our cities, and all our parishes. That the hope which is in us may have the property of endurance, there must be a reason for the hope; and where, we ask, in the whole field of their habitual contemplations are the toil-worn children of poverty to find it? Are they to search for this reason among the archives of history? Are they to gather it out of the mouldering erudition of other days? Are they to fetch it up from the profound and the puzzling obscurities of argumentation? Are they to encounter the toils of scholarship, and ere the light of revelation can guide or can gladden them, think you that they must learn to number, and to balance, and to confront the testimonies of former generations? No! Refuse us the evidence we have been insisting on, and in doing so, you pass an obliterating sponge over nearly all the Christianity that is in our land. It might still continue to be talked of in the cloistered retirements of literary debate and speculation. But the mighty host of our people could take no more rational interest in its questions, than they could in any controversy of the schools. And if the truth of this volume be not legibly stamped upon its own pages—if all the evidence by which we have affirmed it to be most thoroughly and most visibly impregnated be a delusion—if all the varied points of accordancy, between the book of revelation and the book of human experience, be not sufficient to attest the divinity which framed it—

or if this attestation be beyond the understanding of an ordinary peasant—then must Christianity be ever shut up from the vast majority of our species: nor do we see one possible way of causing it to circulate at large among the families of our land.

But let us not be understood, by these remarks, to undervalue the power and the importance of the external evidences of our faith. Though it is to the subject-matter of the testimony itself, that we would send the inquirer for the most satisfying conviction of the truth; yet we hold it of paramount importance to exhibit the strength of argument, and the irresistible force of evidence, which can be adduced for the authenticity and divine authority of Revelation, to silence the gainsayer, and to vindicate Christianity from the assaults of infidelity. And we know not a finer assemblage of evidence for the divine Record, to meet and to overthrow the sophistries and objections with which scepticism is ever assailing it, or to resolve the doubts and difficulties which may agitate the mind of the honest inquirer, than the able and interesting Treatises of which the present Volume is composed. The writers display, in an uncommon degree, extensive knowledge and profound erudition; and they possess every talent and qualification which is essential to solid argument, legitimate reasoning, and sound induction. With a manly spirit, suited to the rectitude of their cause, and possessed of an *experimental* assurance of the truth which they advocate, their arguments are more characterized by heartfelt power than subtle in-

genuity; and, with a feeling of confidence in the strength of their cause, they manifest that dignity which best comports with the sacredness and majesty of truth, by rearing the fabric of their own evidence, without descending to notice all the oft-refuted, yet still re-echoed sophistries and cavils of infidelity. The evidences they present, however, are so extensive and varied, that every order of mind is addressed with suitable proofs for its conviction; and though it would be impossible to advert to every trivial objection which infidelity has invented, or every cavil which impiety has urged, yet without fear or evasion, they have fairly selected, and triumphantly met those difficulties and objections, which infidelity has represented as most formidable to Christianity. Aware that there are infatuated men who reason against Christianity, as if it were pregnant with every mischief —who seem to delight in the imagination, that such an overwhelming calamity as a belief in its doctrines shall never overtake them—and who resist its pretensions with such inflexible obstinacy, as if the abrogation of Christianity would introduce a new order of blessing into our world,—the writers in the present Volume not only introduce Christianity as presenting her credentials, but as stating and expounding her *beneficent* message: While deducing the legitimate internal evidences, arising from the nature, character, and design of Christianity, and its peculiar adaptation to renovate the moral condition of man, they intermingle their evidences with a luminous exhibition of the dispensation of grace—a dispensation so holy, perfect,

and beneficent in its character and operation, that while it is well fitted to bless the life that now is, it furnishes the only solid and comfortable hope for eternity.

In Leslie's "Short and Easy Method with the Deists," and "The Truth of Christianity Demonstrated," we have the historical evidence for the truth of Scripture exhibited in a form so convincing and satisfactory, that the mind which can reject such evidence must evince a total perversity of reason, as well as an abjuration of all such testimony as can substantiate the truth of any by-gone event in this world's history,—which would go to expose every authentic record to the charge of fabulousness, and reduce the best established facts into a state of doubt and uncertainty. The firm coherence of his argument, and the soundness of his marks for distinguishing between truth and falsehood, which he so legitimately applies for ascertaining the authenticity of the facts of Scripture history, render his statements so conclusive and irresistible, that no reply can be made to his demonstrations, which does not imply a dereliction of reason and principle which the bitterest enemy of Christianity would be ashamed to avow. His proofs possess that speciality of character, that, even by the confession of infidelity itself, they can belong only to genuine records, and can never be found but in connexion with events which, in truth and reality, had a positive existence. It must, therefore, be a daring and hardy scepticism indeed, which can elude or resist the force of those unequivocal proofs, by which the author indubitably

establishes the authenticity of the facts which are recorded in Scripture.

Not less conclusive, in another department of evidence, do we hold Lord Lyttleton's "Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St Paul." The soundness of his reasonings, established on the well-known principles of human nature, and the no less sound and philosophical deductions which he makes from the whole sentiments and conduct of the apostle, render his arguments in favour of Christianity so clear and irresistible, that we think no honest mind can give his "Observations" an attentive and unprejudiced perusal, without arriving at a thorough and well-established conviction of the truth of Christianity. To reject such evidence, or to arrive at any other conclusion, would be to betray a most wilful perversity of mind, and to commit a most grievous outrage on the soundest principles and laws of human judgment. From the impossibility of accounting for such conduct by the ingenuity of imposture, it must be by a total inversion of all the motives and principles which are known to influence human conduct, that an opposite conclusion can be drawn to what our author has deduced from an examination of the life and labours of St Paul—that he was indeed a divinely-commissioned agent of heaven, and that the Christian dispensation, which he laboured to establish, has indubitable claims to a divine original.

In Dr Doddridge's Discourses on the "Evidences of Christianity," we have a full and comprehensive survey of all the variety of evidence which is generally adduced in support of the authenticity

and divine authority of the New Testament. The Treatise is no less characterized by the clear and forcible argument which pervades it, than by the affectionate earnestness which it breathes, and the close and pathetic appeals which the excellent author makes to the minds of his readers, on the pre-eminent importance of the truths of the divine record, and of the no less unspeakable danger of neglecting or contemning the gospel message.

The next Treatise, by Dr Bates, on "The Divinity of the Christian Religion," contains a no less comprehensive, and still more powerful exhibition of the various evidences which can be adduced for establishing the truth of Christianity. The evidences from history, from prophecy, from miracles, from the testimony of credible witnesses, are all brought in distinct and convincing review before the mind; and our readers cannot peruse this admirable Treatise, without an increased feeling of confidence in the variety and fulness, and invincible character of that rich assemblage of evidence, on the immoveable basis of which Christianity is established. And while he satisfactorily establishes the truth of Christianity, he does not leave his readers in ignorance of what Christianity is. He not only presents the testimony which accompanies truth, to carry conviction to the understanding, but he presents the truth itself, in such a form as is fitted to commend it to the conscience. And such is our feeling of confidence in the truth, for attesting its own divinity, that we hold the truth itself to possess a power of manifestation, which addresses the heart with a more prevailing and resistless

energy, than either the power of demonstration can press, or the evidence of the most incontestable miracles can enforce.

Dr Owen's Treatise "On the divine Original, Authority, and Self-Evidencing Light and Power of the Holy Scriptures," embraces a distinct, but most important species of evidence; and this article will be held in high estimation by those who desiderate a satisfactory conviction of the claims of the Bible to divine inspiration, of which he adduces the most solid and indubitable proofs; and he affords a no less clear and satisfactory explanation to those who possess no distinct apprehension of the manner in which the word came forth from God, and was again given out by those inspired men to whom it was communicated, as well as the security and infallible certainty that what they gave out as the mind and will of God was indeed of divine original, and a divine communication. On this firm and immoveable basis he establishes the authority of the Scriptures, their claim to a supremacy over the mind and will of those to whom this revelation has come, and the fearful danger of a neglect or a rejection of the message. And the truths which are made to evolve, in the progress of his demonstration, bear a hard and humbling aspect to that proud philosophy which cherishes a feeling of sentimental adoration of the works of nature, which are but the subordinate reflectors of the glory of the Deity, while it turns with antipathy and disgust from that word which the Deity has magnified above all his works, as giving a fuller and more glorious manifestation of his mind and character—a manifestation

of the Deity so surpassing and exalted above that which is exhibited in the visible creation, that, in comparison with the light, and power, and extent of that manifestation which is given out in the Bible, it may well be said to have no glory, by reason of the glory that excelleth. And while we award our meed of praise to the writers of the previous Treatises in this Volume, who have reared such a collective body of evidence to meet and overthrow the no less impotent than impious assaults of infidelity, yet do we hold Dr Owen to have rendered a more essential service to the cause of Divine Revelation, when, by his clear and irresistible demonstrations, he has proved that the written word itself possesses a self-evidencing light and power for manifesting its own divine original, superior to the testimony of eye-witnesses, or the evidence of miracles, or those supernatural gifts with which the first teachers of Christianity were endowed for accrediting their divine mission. And well may the profane or the infidel contemners of revealed truth tremble at their presumption, when they are told not only of the superiority of the word of God in its power of manifestation above all His works, but of the light and power which the written word possesses to attest its own divinity, above all that external evidence which infidel philosophers so much desiderate for establishing the truth of Divine Revelation.

The Treatise of Richard Baxter "On the Folly and Danger of making light of Christ" closes the Volume; and though it does not partake of the character of direct evidence, yet we hold it to be

of prime importance to the cause of Christian truth, as it detects and exposes the latent causes of infidelity in the worldliness, or love of pleasure, or the diversified pursuits which engross the mind, to the utter exclusion of the salvation which the gospel reveals. And truly does he resolve the largest portion of the infidelity which exists, into the infidelity of the heart, and not of the understanding. From the irreconcilable characters of God and Mammon, of Christ and Belial, of the love of the Father, and the love of the world, those infatuated men who are determined to render their homage to the one, must necessarily entertain feelings of hostility to the other; and this hostility of the affections exerts a secret but blinding and delusive influence over the judgment, and in spite of the clearest and most incontrovertible evidence, betraying it into a disbelief of what the depraved heart must wish were not true. Aware as we are, of the extreme reluctance with which men whose minds have become poisoned with the pride of infidelity, or whose hearts have become depraved with the love of sin, admit any argument in favour of Christianity, we could not close our Volume without bringing the forcible and pathetic appeals of Richard Baxter to bear upon their consciences. And if there be one piece in this Volume, which, in preference to another, we would more urgently recommend to their serious regard, it would be this invaluable Treatise of Richard Baxter. Aware as he was of that deep and desperate infatuation by which so many are deceived to their eternal undoing, with the tenderness and pathos of a man

whose heart glowed with angelic benevolence—and with the earnestness and urgency of a man who felt the importance of his message; does he endeavour to persuade men by all that is commanding in the authority of God—by all that is winning in the love of Christ—by all that is inviting in a blessed immortality—and by all that is tremendous in eternal perdition, to flee from the wrath to come, and to lay hold of the offered remedy. And if such men continue in their wilful and obstinate rejection of the gospel, and heedlessly neglect, or perversely resist, the mercy which it offers, then it is not from want of clear and incontrovertible evidence, but from a desperately wicked and deceitful heart which is deceiving them to their ruin; and we know not by what power, or by what sophistry such infatuated men can turn away from them the force of this fearful declaration, That "if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: *in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not*, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

It is well that Christianity has such a firm basis of argumentation to rest upon. It is well that she can be triumphantly borne throughout the whole range of human literature, and can bear to be confronted with all that the fancy or the philosophy of man have ever devised against her reputation. We count every one illustration of her external evidence to be an accession to her cause, nor can we look at the defensive barrier which has been thrown around her without wishing that the public

eye might often be directed to the strength and the glory of her venerable outworks. But let it not be disguised. The surrender of the understanding to the external argument is one thing; the rational principle of Christianity is another. And, therefore, there must be something more than the bare evidence of Christianity, to work the faith which is unto salvation. Many are the accomplished philosophers who have rejected this evidence, and to them it will stand in place of the miracle of tongues to the unbelievers of old. It will be a sign to justify their condemnation. But many also have admitted the evidence, and still the opinion has been as unfruitful of all that is religious, as the conclusion they have come to on any literary question. And, men of genius and accomplishment as they are, they must, to obtain the faith of the gospel, just put themselves on a level with the most untaught of our peasantry. They must submit to be tutored by the same evidence at last. They must labour after the same manifestation of the truth unto their consciences. They must open their Bibles, and give earnest heed unto the word of this prophecy. To the spirit of earnestness they must add the spirit of prayer. They must knock for light at the door which they cannot open, till the day dawns and the day-star arise in their hearts—and then will they find, that, by a way hidden from the wise and the prudent, but revealed unto babes, the word of prophecy may become more sure than any miracle can make it —more sure, than if a voice of attestation were to sound forth upon them from the canopy of heaven

—and greatly more sure than by all that traditionary evidence, which links the present with the past, the period in which we now live with that wondrous period, when such a voice was heard by human ears on the mount of transfiguration.

It is true that the word of the testimony is often perused in vain—that in the reading of the Scriptures, the veil which is upon the heart of the natural man often remains untaken away—and that, after all that is done with him, he persists in blind and wilful obstinacy, and will neither see the doctrine of the Bible, nor the reflection of that doctrine upon his own character. To work this effect, the word must be accompanied by the demonstration of the Spirit, and who shall limit his operations? When we think of the influences of Him who is promised in answer to prayer, and when we farther think of the extent of warrant that we have for prayer, even that we should ask for all such things as are agreeable to the will of God, who willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, and who is ever ready to put a blessing on His own word; then, to the diligent reading of the word, let him add the humble, earnest, and sincere prayer, that "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, may shine into his heart, to give him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as it is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ."

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

TO

THE LIVING TEMPLE;

OR,

A GOOD MAN THE TEMPLE OF GOD.

BY THE REV. JOHN HOWE, A.M.

IT is well remarked by the excellent JOHN HOWE, in the following Treatise, that the "Living Temple," or, as it is frequently styled in the New Testament the "Kingdom of Heaven," which God is setting up in the world, "is not established by might or by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord; who—as the structure is spiritual, and to be situated and raised up in the mind or spirit of man—works, in order to it, in a way suitable thereto; that is, very much by soft and gentle insinuations, to which are subservient the self-recommending amiableness and comely aspect of religion, the discernible gracefulness and uniform course of such in whom it bears rule, and is a settled, living law. It is a structure to which there is a concurrence of truth and holiness; the former letting in a vital, directive, formative light—the latter, a heavenly, calm, and god-like frame of spirit." To the same import is the declaration of our Saviour, when, in answer to the Pharisees who demanded of Him

when the kingdom of God should come, replied, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, lo, there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." We are thus given to understand, that the kingdom which God is establishing in the world, does not consist in external forms and observances—that it is not of a temporal, but of a spiritual character—and that, unlike the establishment of earthly kingdoms, it cometh with none of those visible accompaniments which meet the eye of public observation.

The establishment of a new kingdom in the world carries much in it to strike the eye of an observer. There is a deal of visible movement accompanying the progress of such an event—the march of armies, and the bustle of conspiracies, and the exclamations of victories, and the triumph of processions, and the splendour of coronations. All these doings are performed upon a conspicuous theatre; and there is not an individual in the country, who, if not an actor, may not be at least an observer on the elevated stage of great and public revolutions. He can point his finger, and say, Lo, here! or, lo, there! to the symptoms of political change which are around him; and the clamorous discontent of one province, and the warlike turbulence of another, and the loud expressions of public sentiment at home, and the report of preparation abroad—all force themselves upon the notice of spectators; so that when a new kingdom is set up in the world, that kingdom cometh with observation.

The answer of our Saviour to the question of the Pharisees, may be looked upon as designed to correct their misconceptions respecting the nature of the kingdom which he was to establish. There is no doubt that they all looked for a deliverance from the yoke of Roman authority—that, in their eyes, the Captain of their Salvation was to be the leader of a mighty host, who, fighting under the special protection of God, would scatter dismay and overthrow among the oppressors of their country—that the din of war, and the pride of conquest, and the glories of a widely extended dominion, and all the visible parade of a supreme and triumphant monarchy, were to shed a lustre over their beloved land. And it must have been a sore mortification to them all, when they saw the pretensions of the Messiah associated with the poverty, and the meekness, and the humble, unambitious, and spiritual character of Jesus of Nazareth. We cannot justify the tone of His persecutors; but we must perceive, at the same time, the historical consistency of all their malice, and bitterness, and irritated pride, with the splendour of those expectations on which they had been feasting for years, and which gave a secret elevation to their souls under the endurance of their country's bondage, and their country's wrongs. It marks—and it marks most strikingly—how the thoughts of God are not as the thoughts of man; that the actual fulfilment of those prophecies which related to the history of Judea, turned out so differently from the anticipations of the men who lived in it; and that Jerusalem, which, in point of expectation, was to sit as mistress over

a tributary world, was, in point of fact, torn up from its foundations, after the vial of God's wrath had been poured in a tide of unexampled misery over the heads of its wretched people. Now, what became all the while of those prophecies which respected the Messiah? What became of that kingdom of God which the Pharisees inquired about, and of which, however much they were in the wrong respecting its nature, they were certainly in the right respecting the time of its appearance? Did it actually appear? Is it possible that it could be working its way, at the very time that every hope which man conceived of it was turned into the cruellest mockery? Is it possible that the truth of prophecy could be receiving its most splendid vindication, at the very time that every human interpreter was put to shame, and that all that happened was the reverse of all that was anticipated? Surely if any kingdom was formed at that time, when the besom of destruction passed through the land of Judea, and swept the whole fabric of its institutions away from it—surely if it was such a kingdom, as was to spread, through the seed of Abraham, the promised blessing among all the families of the earth, and that, too, when a cloud of ignominy was gathering upon the descendants of Abraham—surely if at the time when Pagans desolated the Land of Promise, and profaned the temple, and entered the holy place, and wantoned in barbarous levity among those sacred courts where the service of the true God had been kept for many generations—surely if at such a time and with such a burden of disgrace and

misery on the people of Israel, a kingdom was forming that was to be the glory of that people—then it is not to be wondered at that no earthly eye should see it under the gloom of that disastrous period, or that the kingdom of God, coming as it did in the midst of wars and rumours of wars, when men's eyes were looking at other things, and their hearts were failing them, should have eluded their observation.

In common language, a kingdom carries our thoughts to the country over which it is established. The kingdom of Sweden directs the eye of our mind to that part of Europe; and in the various places of the Bible where the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are mentioned, this is one of the significations. But it has also other significations. It sometimes means, not the place over which the royal authority extends, but the royal authority itself. In the first sense, the kingdom of heaven carries our attention to heaven; but with this as the meaning, we could not understand what John the Baptist pointed to, when he said "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." But, in the second sense, it is quite intelligible, and means that the authority which subordinates all the families of heaven to the one Monarch who reigns there, was on the eve of being established with efficacy on earth; or, in other words, that the prayer was now beginning its accomplishment—"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Hence it is that some translators, for the term *kingdom*, substitute the term *reign*; and make our Saviour say, that the reign of God cometh not

with observation, for the reign of God is within you. The will of man is the proper seat of the authority of God. It is there where rebellion against Him exists in its principle; and where that rebellion is overthrown, it is there where the authority of God sits in triumph over all His enemies. Give Him the will of man, and invest that will with an efficient control over the doings of man, and you give Him all He wants. You render Him the one act of obedience which embraces every other. "Give me thy heart," is a precept, the performance of which involves in it the surrender of all the man to all the requirements. It brings the whole life under its authority; for it takes that into its keeping out of which are the issues of life. And could these hearts of ours be brought into subjection to the first and great commandment, obedience would cease to be a task; for we would delight to run in the way of it. To do it would be our meat and our drink. We would know, in the experience of our own lives, that the commandments of God are not grievous. It is only grievous to do that which is against the bent of the will. But to do that which is with the bent of the will, contains in it all the facility of a natural and spontaneous movement. It is doing what is a pleasure to ourselves. It is said to be one of the attributes of rebellion, that it walks in the counsel of its own heart, and in the sight of its own eyes. But this is only when the heart is alienated from the God of heaven, and the eyes are blinded by the god of this world. Give us a heart which the purifying grace of the

gospel hath made clean, and eyes to which Christ hath given light, and then it is no longer rebellion to walk in the counsel of such a heart, and in the sight of such eyes. Obedience against the desires and tendencies of the heart is painful as the drudgery of a slave; and, in fact, to the eye of God, who thinks that if He has not the heart He has nothing, it is no obedience at all—but obedience, with these desires and tendencies, is carried on with all the spring and energy of a pleasurable exercise. And, oh! precious privilege of him who is made by faith to partake in the heart-purifying influences of the gospel! It is the very pleasure which we take in the doing of God's will, and which makes it so delightful to us, that gives to our performances all their value in the eye of God. We will be at no loss to understand the happiness of a well-founded Christian, when the doing of that which is in the highest degree delightful to himself, meets, and is at one, with all the security of God's friendship and God's approbation. We are now touching upon such an experience of the inner man as the world knoweth not, and are describing the mysteries of such a kingdom as the world discerneth not; but whether all our readers go along with us or not, it remains true, that if the love of God be made to reign within us, His will becomes our will. And this commandment proves itself to be the first of all; for when it is fulfilled, the fulfilment of all the rest follows in its train—and the greatest of all; for it, as it were, takes a wide enough sweep to inclose them all, and to form a guard and a security for their observance.

The reign of God on earth, then, is the reign of His will over the unseen movements of the inner man. This is the kingdom He wants to establish. It is the submission of that which is within us, that He claims as His due; and if it be withheld from Him, all the conformity of our outer doings is a vain and an empty sacrifice. Give us a right mind towards God, and you give us, in the individual who owns that mind, all the elements of loyalty. It is there where His authority is felt and acknowledged to be a rightful authority. It is there where its requirements are looked at by the understanding, and laid upon the conscience, and move the will with all the force of a resistless obligation, and form the purpose of obedience, and send forth that purpose, armed with the full power of a presiding influence, over every step and movement of his history. It is in the busy chamber of the mind where all that is great and essential in the work of obedience is carried on. The mighty struggle between the powers of heaven and of hell is for the possession of this little chamber. The subtle enemy of our race knows, that while he has this for his lodging-place, the empire is his own—and give him only the citadel of the heart, and he will revel in all the glories of his undivided monarchy. The strong man reigns in his house with the full authority of its master, till a stronger than he overcome him, and bind him, and take possession of that which he before occupied. And such is the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. It is in the heart of man that he worketh, and is ever plying it with his wiles and contrivances, and

turning its affections to the creature, and blinding it to all that is glorious or lovely in the image of the Creator; and by his power over the fancy, causing it to imagine a greatness, and a stability, and a value, and an enjoyment in the things of the world which do not belong to them; and whispering false promises to the ear of the inner man, and seducing him as he did the first of our race, so as to bring him into the snare of the devil, and to take him captive at his will. In the same manner, he who came to destroy the works of the devil, bends his main force to the quarter where these works are strongest, and their position is most advantageous to the enemy. The heart of man is the mighty subject of this spiritual contest, and the possession of the heart is the prize of victory. To those who have not yet learned to take their lesson from the Bible, all this sounds like a fabulous imagination, or the legendary tale of an artful priesthood to a drivelling and superstitious people. But it is all to be met with in God's revealed communication. You are ignorant of what you ought to know, if you know not that a contest is going on among the higher orders of being for the mastery of all that is within you. Let Christ then dwell in you by faith. He is knocking at the door of your heart, and if you will open it to receive Him, He will enter it. He will sweep it of all its corruptions. He will enable you to overcome, for then greater will be He that is in you than he that is in the world. The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and He making you, by the power of

His Spirit, to abound in these fruits, will in you make another addition to that living temple—that spiritual kingdom which God is establishing in the world.

Man has revolted from God, and a fearful change has taken place in his moral constitution; and thus the things of sight and of sense, instead of leading his thoughts to God, have become the idolatrous objects of his affections. In his original state of innocence, man not only held direct and intimate communion with God, but all that he saw, and all that he enjoyed, conducted his thoughts and his affections to that Being whose love and whose authority reigned in supremacy over his heart. The gratification of his desire for created things, was then in perfect harmony with the love of the Creator. And man would just now have been in this condition if he had not fallen. He would not have counted it his duty, to have violently counteracted his every taste, and every desire, for the things which are created. The practical habit of his life would not have been a constant and strenuous opposition to all that could minister delight to the sensitive part of his constitution. He would not have been ever and anon employed in thwarting the adaptations which God had ordained between the objects that are around him, and his organs of enjoyment. It is true, that when Eve put forth her hand to the forbidden fruit, it was after she had looked upon the tree, and seen that it was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes: but the very same thing is said of the other trees in the garden, "for out of the ground made the Lord to

grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food." Our first parents tasted of all these trees without offence,—and in that habitation of sweets many an avenue of enjoyment was open to them; and a thousand ways may well be conceived, in which the loveliness of surrounding nature would minister delight both to the eye and the feeling of our first parents,—and from every point of that external materialism which God had reared for his accommodation, would there beam a felicity upon the creature whom He had so organized, as to suit his capacities of pleasure to his outward circumstances. We are not to conceive, that during that short-lived period of the world's innocence, and of heaven's favour, there was no gratification transmitted to the soul of man from the sensible and created things which were on every side of him. His taste was gratified,—and amid the pure luxury, and among the delicious repasts of paradise, might be perceived in him a principle of desire, corresponding to what in our days of depravity is termed the lust of the flesh. His eye was gratified, —and as he surveyed the beauties of his garden, and felt himself to be its vested and rightful proprietor, would he experience a principle of desire, which, in its transmission to a corrupt posterity, has now become the lust of the eye. His sense of superior dignity was gratified,—and as he stalked in benevolent majesty among the tribes of creation that had been placed beneath him, would he feel the kindlings of that very affection, which, tainted by the malignity of sin, has sunk down among his offspring into the pride of life. All these affec-

tions, which in a state of guilt have so virulent an operation on the heart, as to be opposite to the love of God,—there is not one of them but may have had a pure and a righteous counterpart in a state of innocence.

And the whole explanation of the matter appears simply to be this. Adam lived at that time in communion with God. In all that he enjoyed, he saw a Giver's hand, and a Giver's kindness. That link, by which the happiness he derived from the use of the creature was associated with the love of the Creator, was clearly and constantly present with him. There was not one thing which he either tasted or saw, that was not regarded by him as a token of the Divine beneficence; insomuch that the expression of a Father's care, and a Father's tenderness, beamed upon his senses, from every one object with which his senses came into intercourse. Whatever he looked upon with the eye of his body, was but to him the material vehicle, through which the love of the great Author of all found its way to him, with some new accession of enjoyment; nor could there one pleasurable feeling then be made to arise, which was not most exquisitely heightened, and most intimately pervaded, by the grateful remembrance of him who had placed him in his present condition, and whose liberal hand had done so much to bless and to adorn it. In the case of a human benefactor, there is no difficulty in perceiving, that there is room in the heart, both for a sense of gratification from the gift, and for a sense of gratitude to the giver. In the case of the heavenly Benefactor, the union of these two things stood

constant and inseparable, and was only dissolved by the fall. A sense of God mingled with every influence that came from the surrounding materialism upon our first parents. It impregnated all. It sanctified all. The things of sense did not detain them for a single moment from God; because, while busied with the work of enjoyment, they were equally busied with the work of gratitude. All that they tasted, or handled, or saw, were memorials of the Divinity; insomuch that His visible presence in the garden was never felt to be an interruption. It only made Him present to their senses, who was constantly present to their thoughts. It for a time withdrew them from some of the scenes on which his character was imprinted; but it summoned them to a direct contemplation of the character itself. While it suspended their enjoyment of a few of the tokens of his love, it gave them a nearer and more affecting enjoyment of its reality; and instead of reluctantly withdrawing from those objects which were merely dear to them as the reflections of His kindness, when He called them to an act of fellowship with the kindness itself, did they recognise His voice, and obeyed it with ecstasy.

Now, without adverting to the way in which the transition from the former to the present state of man's moral nature has taken place—such in fact has been the transition, that the two states are not only unlike, but in direct and diametric opposition to each other—there is no such change in his physical constitution, but that what tasted pleasurably to him in his state of innocence, tastes pleasurably to him still—and what looked fair to him in external

nature then, looks fair to him now—and in many instances, what regaled his senses in the one state, is equally fitted to regale them in the other. The purity of Eden did not lie in the want or the weakness of all physical sensation; neither does the guilt of our accursed world lie in the existence, or even in the strength, of physical sensation. But in the former state, the gift stood at all times associated in the mind of man with the Giver. God rejoiced over his children to do them good; and they, while rejoicing in the good that they obtained, felt it all to be heightened and pervaded by a sense of his kindness. Every new accession to their enjoyment, instead of seducing them from their loyalty, only served to confirm it; and brought a new accession to that love, which made their duty to be their delight, and their highest privilege and pleasure to be the keeping of His commandments. The moral and spiritual change which our race has undergone, consisted in this—that the tie in their minds was broken, by which the enjoyment of the gift led to a sense and a recognition of the Giver. It is the breaking asunder of this link which simply and essentially forms the corruption of man. He drinks of the stream, without any recognition of the fountain from which it flows. God is banished from his gratitude and from his thoughts. With him the whole business of enjoyment is made up of an intercourse between his senses, and the objects that are suited to them. There is no intercourse between his mind and that Being, who is the Author both of his senses, and of all that is fitted to regale them. He makes use of created things, and has

pleasure in the use of them. But in that pleasure he rests and terminates. Instead of vehicles leading him to God, they are in his eye stationary and ultimate objects; the possession of which, and the enjoyment of which, are all that he aspires after. Pleasure is prosecuted for itself. Wealth is prosecuted for itself. Distinction is prosecuted for itself. There is no wish on the part of natural men for a portion in any thing beyond these. God is not the object of their desire, and he is just as little the object of their dependence. It is neither God whom they are seeking, nor is it to God that they look for the attainment of what they are seeking. They count upon fortune, and experience, and the constancy of the course of nature, and any thing but the power, and the purposes, and the sovereignty of God. He, in fact, is deposed from his supremacy, both as an object of desire and an object of dependence. Men have deeply revolted from God; and they have raised the world, not into a rival, but into the sole and triumphant divinity of their adoration. The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, may have all had their counterpart in the constitution of Adam ere he fell; but instead of averting his eye from the Father, they brought the Father more vividly into his remembrance—instead of intercepting God, they conducted both his thoughts and his affections to the Being who openeth his hand liberally, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing. But with the diseased posterity of Adam, these affections are only so many idolatrous desires towards the creature—so many acts of homage towards the

world, regarded in the light of a satisfying and independent deity—and therefore is it said of them, that "they are not of the Father, but of the world."

Now, to bring this home to familiar experience —who is there, in looking forward with delight to some entertainment of luxury—or who is there, in prosecuting with intense devotion some enterprise of gain—or who is there, in adding to the pomp of his establishment, that ever thinks of God as having furnished the means, or as having created the materials of these respective gratifications? They look no farther than to the materials themselves. For the indulgence of these various affections, they draw not upon God, but upon this solid and visible world, to which they ascribe all the power and all the independency of God. They look not to any pleasure which they enjoy as emanating from the first cause. They see it emanating from secondary causes; and with these do they stop short, and are satisfied. It is this which stamps the guilt of atheism on the whole practical habit and system of human life. In the prosecution of its objects, not one civil obligation may have been violated—not one deed may have been committed to forfeit the respect of society—not one thing may ever have been charged upon this world's idolater to alienate the regard, but every thing may have been done by him to conciliate the kindness, and draw down upon him the flattery of his fellow-men. But, alas! he has broken loose from God! He lives, from the cradle to the grave, without any practical recognition of Him in whom he lives, and moves,

and has his being. A demonstration of social virtue, so far from offending, may minister to his complacency. But to bid him crucify his affections for the things of sense, is to bid him inflict a suicide upon his person. And thus, while beneficent in conduct, and fair in reputation among his fellows, may he in prospect be linked with the fate of a world that is soon to be burnt up, and in character be tainted with the spirit of a world that is lying in wickedness. And thus it is, that there may be spiritual guilt in the midst of social accomplishment —there may be wrath from heaven in the midst of applause and connivance from the world—there may be impending disaster in the midst of imagined safety—there may be abomination in the sight of God, in the midst of highest esteem and popularity among men.

There is nothing in the daily routine of this world's luxury, or this world's covetousness, or this world's ambition, which suggests to its carnal and earth-born children the conviction of sinfulness. The round of pleasure is described, or the career of adventure is prosecuted, or the path of aggrandizement is entered upon; and it does not once meet the imagination of this world's votary, that, in every one of these pursuits, he is widening his departure from God. He is not aware of the deathly character of his habits; and, protect him only from the voice of human execration, he hears, or hears without alarm, that voice of truth which pronounces him wholly given over to idolatry. And yet can any thing be more evident, even of the most harmless and reputable members of society, than that

the gifts of a kind and liberal Father have stolen away from Him the affections of His own children—than that they have taken up with another portion, than with Him who originates and sustains them—than that they have built their foundation on the creature, and look on the Creator with the defiance, at least of unconcern? They in reality have disjoined themselves from God. Instead of being conducted by the sight of the world to the thought of God, they look no further than the world, and it stands in their hearts contrasted with God. Instead of the one leading to the other, the one detains and withdraws from the other. They are so conversant with the world as to lose sight of God. For this we can appeal to the conscience of every natural man, and on this we ground the affirmation, that though in the keen pursuit of the money which purchaseth all things, he may have never deviated from the onward path of integrity, he has been receding by every footstep to a greater distance from heaven—and with an eye averted from God, has been looking towards those things, the love of which is opposite to the love of the Father.

And it is because men are thus engrossed with the visible objects of time, that they have lost sight of their own individual concern in that spiritual kingdom which God is setting up in the world. Because it does not rank among the visibilities of earth, it is looked at by them with the most heedless indifference, and they regard its existence as a fiction of the imagination. The subject of that kingdom is indeed invisible. It worketh its silent

and unseen way through the world of souls, and it may be multiplying its subjects, and widening the extent of its dominion every day, without the eye of man being able to perceive it. There is a day of revelation coming; and the hidden things which are to be laid open on that day are the secrets of the heart. But, in the meantime, the heart is, in a great measure, shut up from observation; and many of its movements will remain unnoticed and unknown till that day shall discover them. And we are expressly told, that that greatest of all movements, by which it turns from Satan unto God, is a hidden operation. It is said of the Spirit, who worketh this movement, that no man knoweth whence it cometh, or whither it goeth. It makes its noiseless way through streets and families. The visible instrument which God employs may come equally to all who are within its reach; but the effect which the Spirit giveth to that instrument, is not a matter of direct perception, nor can we tell who the individual is whose heart it will ply with the word of God, so as to give all the weight and power of a hammer breaking the rock in pieces. O how much of the inner man remains impenetrably hidden under all that is visible in the general aspect of society! To man himself it is an unknown field, though the beings who are above man have all their eyes upon it. In looking to human affairs, it is the only field they deem worthy of contemplation. The frail and fleeting materials of common history, are as nothing in the eye of those who count nothing important but that which has stamped upon it the character of eternity.

To recommend it to them, it must have the attribute of endurance; or, in other words, it must be related to souls, which are the only subjects in this world that God hath endued with the vigour of immortality. Now the soul of man is invisible to us, nor can we see, as through a window, its desires, and its movements, and its silent aspirations. There is a thick covering of sense thrown over it; and thus it is, that what, to the eye of angels appears the only worthy object of attention in the history of the species, is, to the eye of man himself, an unknown mystery. His eye is engrossed with the glare of what is seen, and of what is sensible; and the secrecies of the soul lie on the back-ground of his contemplation altogether. He knows as little about the busy doings which go on in the heart of his neighbour, as he knows of what goes on on the surface of some remote and undiscovered world. In the wideness of immensity, there are fields so distant as to be beyond the ken of eye or of telescope; but there is also a field immediately around us, which lies wrapt in unfathomable secrecy. O it is little dwelt upon by man, whose thoughts are so taken up with what the eye seeth and the ear can listen to. But on this field there are doings of mightier import than the whole visible universe lays before us. It forms part of the world of spirits. It is the field of discipline for eternity. It is the field on which is decided the fate of conscious and never-ending existence. It is a province in the moral government of God, and in worth outweighs all the splendour and all the richness of that material magnificence which is

around us. The earth is to be burned up, and the heavens are to pass away as a scroll; but on this near, though unnoticed field, there is a mighty interest now forming, which will survive the wreck of all that is visible; and it is there that God gains accessions to his kingdom which endureth for ever.

But there are two remarks by which we would limit and define the extent of what is said by our Saviour, about the kingdom of God coming not with observation. It holds true of every man who becomes the subject of that kingdom, that by his fruits ye shall know him. There is a visible style of conduct which bespeaks him to be a different man from others, and a different man from what he himself was before he entered into the kingdom of God. Let the reign of God be established over the inner man, and it will tell, and tell observably, upon the doings of the outer man. But remark here, that though the kingdom of God may be the subject of observation where it exists, yet the bringing of that kingdom into existence, or, in other words, the coming of that kingdom may not be with observation. Now, what is true of an individual, is true of many. The formation of the kingdom of God, in the hearts of the majority of a neighbourhood, would give rise to a spectacle fitted to strike the general eye; and there is something broadly visible in the complexion of a renovated and moralized people. There is a change of aspect in the doings of every man who is born again, that meets the observation of his neighbours; and a sufficient number of such men would give rise to such a general change as to solicit general

observation. But though the change, after it is established, may excite their notice, yet the coming on of the change may not excite their notice. The steps by which it is accomplished may elude the notice of the generality altogether. The little stone may be too small to draw upon it the attention of a distant world; but it may compel their attention by its progress, and even long before it filleth the whole earth, the whole earth may be filled with inquiries after it. The work of the Spirit is visible, but the working of the Spirit is not visible. He bloweth where He listeth; and though the kingdom of God, that he is to establish in the world, shall swallow up all the rest, and by its magnitude force itself upon the general observation, yet, in the first stages of its progress, and in the act of coming, it may not be with observation.

Our other remark is, that though the kingdom of God cometh not with observation, yet by the prophecies of God, the origin and the sudden enlargement of that kingdom, have a place assigned to them in the march of visible history. The four great monarchies form conspicuous eras in the history of man. They come with observation, and they mark, in a general way, the infancy, and the growth, and the matured establishment of that kingdom which cometh not with observation. We lie at the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's image. This is the place in the descending scale of ages which we occupy; and the present political aspect of Europe was seen afar by the prophet Daniel through the vista of many generations. The ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided, form the

closing scene in his magnificent representation of futurity; and it is this distant period which, in the mighty range of his prophetic eye, he is employed in contemplating, when he tells us of a kingdom made without hands, and, from the size of a little stone, growing into a mountain which filled the whole earth. The coming of these ten kingdoms carried on it a broad aspect, which addressed itself to the senses of men. They were ushered in with all the notes and characters of preparation. Kings met, and kings combated on a conspicuous arena; the loud uproar of the battle was heard, and the rumour of it spread itself; and each of the predicted kingdoms made its entrance into the world, with the pomp, and the circumstance, and the visible insignia of war. It is in the time of these kingdoms that the kingdom of God is to break forth on every side; and the want of those visible accompaniments, which mark the progress and the establishment of other kingdoms, signalizes the kingdom of God, and stamps upon it the peculiar character of coming not with observation. There is a silence and a secrecy in the progress of this kingdom, which do not belong to the others. It has its signs too, but they are not such signs as the Pharisees were looking for, when they asked about the kingdom of God, and about the signs of its appearance. The interpreters of prophecy have been watching, for whole centuries, all the variations which take place in the restless politics of this world—they have been pursuing every fluctuation in the ever-changing history of the times,—but the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image still represent the great

outline of European society. It is not in the revolutions of political power that we are to look for the direct or immediate symptom of God's approaching kingdom. The effect of that kingdom is to revolutionize the hearts of men. The Alexander of a former day, filled with generous resentment at the wrongs of his outraged country, and gathering energy from despair, and marching at the head of a population rallying around the standard of revenge, out of all his provinces, and aided by the tempests of heaven, might have overwhelmed that power which had spread its desolating triumphs over half the monarchies of Europe. But all this might have been done, and the little stone have remained all the while stationary, and the flock of Christ received no addition to its numbers; and should the same rapacity of ambition exist among the rulers of the world, and the same profligacy among the people, and the same baleful infidelity among the learned, and the same lofty contempt for the holy spirit and doctrines of the gospel among the upper classes of society, and the same devotedness to the good things of life spreading among all its classes a spiritual indifference to the law of God, —then the kingdom of God has made no progress, and all the characters of Antichrist stand as deeply engraved as ever upon the aspect of the existing generation. But should the heart of the present Nicholas receive a secret visit from that Spirit which bloweth where He listeth—should it be turned, with all its affections, to the Saviour who died for him—should the renewed soul of the monarch own in silent reverence the power of a higher

monarchy, and, instead of his plans and his purposes of ambition and war, should his heart be filled with the holy ambition of dedicating all his means and all his energies to the spread of Christianity in the world; then, in the solitude of his inner chamber, an unseen preparation might be going on for helping forward the establishment of the kingdom of God: and when we think of the small place which these doings occupy in the columns of a gazette, or in the deliberations of a cabinet, or in the earnest contemplation of the general mind in Europe—above all, when we think that they are chiefly carried on by men who, through the great mass of society, are derided or unknown —then may we well understand how a kingdom, spreading its unseen influence through such private channels, and earning all its triumphs in the hearts and bosoms of individuals, is a kingdom which cometh not with observation.

We may easily understand, from what has been stated, how inefficient must be many of the methods which are actually resorted to for extending true religion, or the kingdom of God, in the world. It is not by crusading it against the power of infidel governments, that you will establish this kingdom. It is not by enacting it against the heresy of unscriptural opinions, that you will carry forward the establishment of this kingdom. It is not by the solemn deliberations of a legislature, sitting in judgment over questions that can only be carried into effect by the civil authority of the state, that you can at all help forward the establishment of this kingdom in the world. We will venture to

say, that the mad enterprise of the middle ages did not add one subject to the kingdom of God. They may have stormed the holy city, so as to plant upon its battlements the standard of Christendom; but they did not storm a single human heart, so as to plant within it a principle of holiness. The citadel of the heart must be plied with another engine; and the strong man who reigns and who occupies there, may smile and may sit in secure defiance to the warlike preparations of a whole continent. No external violence of any kind can force the will and the principle of man to its subserviency. Whatever effect it may have on the territory of earthly princes, it cannot add a single inch to the territory of the kingdom of God; and that whether the instrument of religious frenzy be an army or a parliament, after expending all its force, and doing nothing, it is at length, by the working of another instrument, and the silent but powerful efficacy of another expedient, that we make a way for the establishment of God's Living Temple in the world.

This brings us to the question, What is this instrument? The Spirit of God is the agent in every conversion of every human soul from Satan unto God. He is the alone effectual worker in this matter, but He worketh by instruments; and it is our part to put them in readiness, and to do those things to the doing of which He stands pledged to impart the efficacy of His all-subduing influences. It was the Spirit, and He alone, who gave the apostles all the enlargement they got on the day of Pentecost: but they put themselves in readiness,

by, obeying the prescribed direction to go to Jerusalem; and there they waited and they prayed for the promise of the Father. Had they not been at their prescribed post, they would have obtained no part whatever in the promised privilege; and in like manner we, with every sentiment of dependence on the power of the Spirit, should, both for ourselves and others, do those things, in the doing of which alone we have reason to expect that He will come down with all that energy of impression, and all that richness of gift and of endowment, which belong to Him. The apostles were the human instruments for the dispensation of the Spirit in those days; and we cannot do better than to take our lesson from them, and observe what they had to do, that the Spirit of God, working along with them, might turn the hearts of men, and extend the proper kingdom of God over the proper ground which that kingdom has to occupy. They laid before those to whom they addressed themselves the word of God, and they prayed for the Spirit of God, that He might take hold of His own instrument, and make it bear with effect upon the consciences and the understandings of men. The lesson is a short one, but it comprises all that we have to do in the work of extending Christianity through the world. Be it on our own behalf, and with a view to bring down upon our own souls the benefits of the gospel, and the best thing we can turn ourselves to is to read diligently the Bible, and to pray diligently for that Spirit, who pours the brilliancy of a warm and affecting light over all its pages. Be it on behalf of others, and with a view to secure to them the

benefits of the gospel, then, if they are immediately around us, the best thing we can do is to ply them with the instructions of the Bible, and to pray for the coming down of that power which can alone give these instructions all their efficacy. Hence the stationary apparatus of a country where Christianity is established—consisting of schools, where the reading of the Bible is taught; and churches, where the meaning of the Bible is expounded; and official men, whose business it is to pray themselves, and to press the exercise of prayer on others, to that God who orders intercessions in behalf of all, because He willeth all to be saved. But should it be in behalf of men who live in a distant country —and the precept of "Go and preach the gospel to every creature," gives a legitimacy to the attempts of Christianizing them, which all the ridicule and all the wisdom of this world cannot overthrow—then the stationary apparatus becomes a moveable one; and the word of God, translated into other languages, and human messengers to carry that word and to expound it—and Christians abroad to spread around them the message of salvation, and Christians who stay at home praying to the God of all influence, and giving Him no rest till He pour such a blessing on other lands that there shall be no room to receive it. This lays before us the godly apparatus, which we rejoice to observe is in growing operation among the men of the present day; and while Bible Societies, and Missionary Societies, and Praying Societies, have the full cry of ridicule discharged upon them by the men of the world—while the disgrace of an

obscure and contemptible fanaticism is made to lie upon all these operations—while the affairs of temporal kingdoms, and the fluctuations of their ever-veering politics, fill up the columns of every newspaper, and form the talk of every company—there are holy men now dealing with the hearts and the principles of the people in our own country, and of savages in distant lands; and amid all the noisy contempt and resistance they have gathered around them, with the sanction of apostolical example, and the persevering use of apostolical instruments, are they working their silent but effectual way to the magnificent result, and the final establishment of the kingdom of God in the world.

And thus it is, that men become themselves living temples of God, and that God's living temple, his spiritual kingdom, is extended and established throughout the world. And we cannot better reply to the question, What is the best instrument for promoting and extending the kingdom of God in the world? than by referring our readers to the following Treatise of JOHN HOWE, "The Living Temple, or a Good Man the Temple of God." This Treatise, which we have introduced to the notice of our readers, is less known to the Christian public than some of the other productions of this celebrated author. It is not because that, either in itself or in its subject, it possesses less worth or less importance than those pieces of this author, which are better known and have acquired greater popularity—for, in respect to both, it holds a high rank among the numerous and valuable

productions of this much-admired writer. But we apprehend the reason of its not obtaining such general circulation, arises from the circumstance of the main subject of the Treatise—the formation of God's Living Temple in the world—being intermingled with his lengthened and elaborate demonstrations of the existence of God—and from his profound and metaphysical controversies with Spinoza and the French infidels, respecting the uncreated Being, and the eternal self-existence of the Deity, extending through nearly half the original Treatise. And, though we hold this profound and erudite exposure of atheism, to contain the most perfect and unanswerable demonstration of the existence of a God with which we are acquainted—yet the deep and metaphysical character of his argumentation, renders it too occult and abstruse to be easily apprehended by ordinary readers; and thus is it fitted to repel them from entering on a piece of superlative excellence. It was under this conviction, and to render the Treatise more acceptable and useful to the Christian public, that we have divested the present edition of those elaborate disquisitions, into which he had been drawn by the French infidels, and which were extraneous to the specific design of the work, and have only presented our readers with what relates to the author's main subject—the method by which the reign of truth and holiness is established in the hearts of men, in order to their becoming temples of the Living God.

To those who desiderate a full and comprehensive exhibition of the gospel scheme, for the restoration

of our fallen and apostate race to the lost image and communion of the Godhead, we would recommend this invaluable Treatise to their perusal. He gives a deeply affecting, but justly descriptive representation of the apostasy, and consequent ruin and depravity of man, in his melancholy but magnificent delineation of the ruined, desolate, and forsaken condition of that noble Living Temple, where God once dwelt, and which was once blessed and beautified by the Divine Presence. And he gives a no less powerful and scriptural representation of the wisdom and glory, of the plans and purposes, of the Divine Mind, for the rebuilding of this fallen and deserted temple by Emmanuel, that God might, in perfect consistency with the holiness and righteousness of His august government, again tabernacle with man—and that the love, and the loyalty, and the obedience which were due to Heaven's great Monarch, might be re-established in the hearts of men, in order that they might again be restored to that blissful communion and intercourse with God which they had forfeited by their apostasy. And who can estimate the might and the magnitude of that great undertaking, by which Emmanuel achieved the restoration of this ruined temple? How the temple of His own body had to be destroyed, that by His sufferings and death He might expiate the guilt of an apostate world—and make reparation for the offence done to Heaven's righteous government—and effect a reconciliation between God and His alienated creatures—and obtain the communication of the Holy Spirit to renovate and adorn this desolated ruin, that the

great Inhabitant might return and again occupy His long-deserted temple. It is because men are insensible to the extent of the ruin and the desolation which sin has effected, that they are so insensible to the greatness of that deliverance which the Saviour had to achieve for the restoration of man to the enjoyment of the Divine Presence.

To establish the reign of truth and holiness in the hearts of men, and thus to render them fit temples for the Divinity, is the grand and ultimate design of God in that wonderful dispensation which is revealed in the gospel. O it is little thought of by men, in whose hearts the god of this world has established his reign, what a mighty change must be effected ere they become living temples of God! It is because they are so insensible to the nature and extent of the ruin, that they are so insensible to the magnitude of that change which they must undergo ere they become fit for the divine residence. It is not a repair, but a rebuilding. It is not a reform, but a thorough regeneration. It is fearful to think of the delusion which prevails in the great mass of society respecting this mighty change. It is not merely the infidel and the practical atheist, to whom HOWE so well addresses the language of terror and alarm, that require to be awakened. When we think of the spiritless indifference, and cold irreligion of many professors of Christianity—when we think of the lukewarm decencies, and heartless conformities, of many who profess their attachment to the Saviour—and compare them with that spirituality of mind, and renovation of heart, which this excellent author

so well sets forth, as constituting the Living Temple, it may well alarm the consciences of many a decent and reputable professor of the gospel. And it ought to reach conviction to the heart of many, whose complacency in their own state has never been disturbed, that, amidst the many earth-born qualities and endowments with which their character in society is adorned—while their hearts are devoted to earthliness, and the world forms the object of their idolatrous affections—they are still unfit for the divine residence, and are living without God in the world.

Now, it is the scriptural view of the magnitude of the change that is implied in becoming a Christian, which makes Christianity, in the entire sense of the term, so revolting both to the pride and the sagacity of nature. It looks so wild and impossible an enterprise to draw away the affections from that which appears to give life and motion to the whole of human industry. The demand appears so extravagant, when asked to renounce our liking for what all men like—and we appear to be pushing the exactions of religion so unreasonably far, when we represent it as incompatible with the love of wealth, or grandeur, or animal gratification—that to the eye of many a cool and sober-minded citizen, it appears in the light of a very unlikely speculation. With the eye of a strong practical understanding, much and judiciously exercised in the realities of business, he regards the man of such lofty and spiritual lessons as a visionary altogether—but he shrewdly guesses that there is no danger of obtaining many real disciples to a system, so utterly at

variance with the most urgent principles of the human constitution.

Now, to repel the contempt, and also the apparent common sense of all this resistance, we might easily demonstrate, that without any mitigation whatever of the spirit of Christianity, the service of God, would still remain a reasonable service. But we shall content ourselves with urging upon you one argument which the Bible furnishes, which is, that the world passeth away, and the lust thereof. There is a result pointed to here, ye sage and calculating men, who are looking so intently forward to the result of your varied speculations. There is an event which is surely coming upon you all, and which will put to shame all the glory of secular wisdom, and hurry to a prostrate ruin all the might and magnificence of your grovelling enterprises. In a few little years, and time will arbitrate this question. It will tell us who is the visionary—he who is wise for this world, or he who is wise for eternity. A day is coming, when the busy ambition of your lives will all be broken up—when death will smile, in ghastly contempt, over the vanity of earthly affections—when, summoning you away from this warm and comfortable dwelling-place, he will call your body to its grave, and your spirit to its reckoning—and upon the falling down of that screen which separates the two worlds, will it appear that the man who has sought his portion among the schemes, and the pursuits, and the passing shadows of our present state, was indeed the visionary. With this element of computation do we neutralize all the contempt which nature feels

and nature expresses against the abstractions of a spiritual Christianity—and pronounce of him who disowns it, that he is indeed the blind and pitiable maniac, wasting himself upon trifles, and lost and bewildered among the frivolities of an idiot's dream.

On entering some busy place of commercial intercourse, and perceiving what it is that forms the ruling desire of every heart, and the ruling topic of every conversation—and feeling the resistless evidence that is before him, of the world being the resting-place of every individual, and its perishable objects forming all that they long for, and all that they labour after—and, at the same time, observing what a face of respectable intelligence is thus lavished on the pursuits of earthliness—a Christian looker-on cannot but feel the strength of that discountenance which is thus laid on the views and the principles of spiritual men. The vast aggregate of mind and of example in the world appears to be against him; and he feels as if left alone to his own visionary speculation, a gaze of universal contempt was directed against that peculiarity, in which he meets so few to share and to sympathize with him. But let him only look a little further on, and this will both revive his confidence, and retort on the whole opposing species the very charge by which he was well nigh overwhelmed. In a few years, and all that is visible of the mass of life, and thought, and ambition, that is before him, will be a mouldering mass of dust and rottenness in the churchyard. There is evermore a rapid transference of that living crowd, one by one, from the place of business to the place of

burial. In a few years, and the transference will be completed, and every one of these intense, and eager, and speculative beings, shall have disappeared from this busy scene, and shall have gone to share in the still more awfully interesting and important scenes of eternity.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

TO

THE SELECT LETTERS

OF THE

REV. WILLIAM ROMAINE, A.M.

In our former Essay to Mr Romaine's Treatises on the Life, Walk, and Triumph of Faith, we observed, that the great and unceasing topics on which he delighted to expatiate were, the atoning blood and perfect righteousness of Christ, as forming the great and only foundation of his hope and of his confidence towards God. These important doctrines of the Christian faith, form the no less favourite and oft-recurring theme which pervades, and is diffused through the whole texture of the excellent Letters of which the present Volume is composed. And though they may not be fitted to stimulate the understanding, or to regale the fancy of the merely intellectual reader; yet, to the simple-hearted and spiritually-minded Christian, these precious and consoling truths, however frequently presented, will be felt in all the freshness and power of their peace-speaking, holy, and regenerating influence. In this respect, he imitated the example of the great apostle of the Gentiles, who expressed his determination to know nothing among his people "save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

We have frequently insisted on one great claim that the doctrine of Christ crucified has upon our attention; namely, that, by the knowledge of it, we obtain deliverance from the greatest calamity which hangs over our species; and that is, the curse of God's violated law, with all the pains and penalties which are consequent thereupon. We shall, in our following observations, advert to another mighty claim which the same doctrine has upon our attention; namely, that, by the knowledge of it, we farther obtain the meritorious, or the rightful possession of God's favour; so that we do not simply enter upon the bliss of eternity as having become ours in fact, and by a mere deed of generosity, but we enter upon it as having become ours in equity, and by a deed of justice. Through Christ crucified we acquire a title to heaven as our reward, and that as much as if we ourselves had done that stipulated work, for which heaven was rendered to us as the stipulated wages: and this is a very different footing from that of the bare conveyance of a gift, for it is a conveyance that is secured and shielded by the guarantees of a covenant; so as to make it, not a mere act of mercy, but an act of righteousness for God to bestow; and we, in receiving, lay hold not merely of a donative, but also of our due.

Now, there are many who do not perceive that this second privilege, of being instated, through Christ crucified, in a righteousness before God, is essentially distinct from the former privilege, that of being delivered from guilt. They contemplate the whole of a sinner's reconciliation with God, as

one general benefit coming out of the atonement that has been rendered for him on the cross, and which does not admit of being severed into parts, as has been done by the adepts of an artificial and scholastic theology. They are not disposed to look separately to our being freed from condemnation, and so rescued from hell; and to our being vested with a positive righteousness, and so made the rightful heirs and expectants of heaven. They would rather abide by their habit of viewing the gift that is by Jesus Christ as one and indivisible; and regard the attempt to decompose it into ingredients, more as a subtilty of human invention, than as the dictate of a mind that has been soundly and scripturally informed. And thus would they treat lightly the distinction that has been so much urged by some theologians, between the passive and the active obedience of Christ; or between the efficacy of the one to redeem from the incurred penalty, and the efficacy of the other to reinstate in the forfeited reward; between the tendency of His sufferings to avert all the wrath of the Divinity, and so to turn away from us the displeasure under which we lay, and the tendency of His services to restore to us the forfeited reward, and so transfer to us, for whom these services were undertaken, God's favour and kindness, as much as if they had been rendered in our own person and by our own performances. This attempt to mark off the mediatorship of Christ into two great departments, has been branded as an attempt to be wise above that which is written; and, when pursued into the still greater nicety of endeavouring to trace and to

follow it throughout the line of demarcation that is betwixt them, then has the whole speculation been denounced as one that ministers questions of strife rather than of godly edifying, and to which we cannot turn aside, without being involved in perverse disputings, and the jangling of vain controversy.

Now, we fully participate in this dislike at all such metaphysics of theology, as minister nothing in the way of comfort, or of direction, or of salutary influence to the plain mind of a plain and practical inquirer. And therefore we shall attempt nothing at present that is not quite broad and palpable, and shall avoid every thing that would require an eye of very minute or microscopic discrimination. It may be a matter of no great usefulness so to arrange and to classify the privileges of a believer, as accurately to refer each to the distinct services by which Christ hath insured it for those who put their trust in Him. But surely it is of importance to know what these privileges are, and for this purpose to make them the objects, if not of any acute or subtile exercise of the understanding, at least of simple enumeration. And we should feel as if much had been left untold, were we not made to know that Christ hath brought in an everlasting righteousness, as well as finished transgressions, and made an end of sins—that He hath won for us the reward of heaven, as well as averted from us the vengeance of hell—that He hath not only redeemed us from the sentence of death but hath built up for us a title unto life everlasting—that, besides expunging our name from the book of condemna-

tion, He hath graven it in the book of life—that, instead of standing before God simply as acquitted creatures, and therefore preserved from the place of condemnation, we stand before Him in the robe of another's righteousness, and therefore with the investiture of such an order of merit, as makes it fit that we should be translated to a high place of favour and of dignity. We want not to probe and to penetrate into the hidden intricacies of the question. But surely, if to be simply dismissed from the bar at which we stood as arraigned criminals be one thing, and it be another to be thence preferred to a title of renown, or to some station wherewith happiness and honour await us near the palace of our sovereign, then it concerns us to know that there is a justification as well as an atonement; that there is a righteousness as well as a redemption; that Christ hath done more than advance us to the negative or midway condition of mere innocence; that He hath wrought out for us a mightier transition than to a state of exemption from the torments of the accursed; that He hath not only retrieved our condition, but hath reversed it, utterly changing the character of our eternity, and turning it from an eternity of torment to an eternity of triumph—having both borne the full weight of our sufferings by taking on Himself the guilt of our sins, and having given us of His own righteousness, as our passport and title-deed to the glories of paradise.

And this view is not without warrant and authority from Scripture. The redemption which is through the blood of Christ is the forgiveness of sins. The righteousness of Christ, which is made

to rest on all who believe, brings along with it a title to positive favour, which is something more than forgiveness. The creditor who cancels our debt, does us a distinct and additional good, when, furthermore, he puts the deeds or the documents into our hands by which we are constituted the rightful claimants of any given property. And so Christ, in one place, is represented as a surety for the sins of those who believe in Him; and in another, as having purchased for them an inheritance, to which they, and they alone, have the right of entry and of possession. Moreover, we read of Christ being "delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification;" or, that by His death He made atonement for sin; and by His resurrection He re-entered heaven, and is there employed in preparing those mansions by which are rewarded the righteousness of those who believe in Him. One fruit of the mediation of Christ is said to be peace with God. But not only so, writes the apostle; in addition to having drawn back His hostility, He sends forth upon us His loving-kindness. And hence another fruit of the mediation is, that we have access to the grace wherein we stand. Yet it must be owned, that, notwithstanding the real distinction which there is between release from a penalty and admittance to a positive reward, and the corresponding distinction that has been made by theologians, between the passive obedience of Christ, by which it is held that the one has been averted, and the active obedience of Christ, by which it is held that the other has been rightfully earned for us,—it must be owned, we say, notwithstanding, that it i.

the obedience of Christ unto the death which seems to have formed the main price, not only of all the immunities, but of all the privileges that believers enjoy. It was from His death that the incense of a sweet-smelling savour arose unto God. It was because of His death that God highly exalted Him, and gave Him a name above every name. It was from the grave that He ascended, rich in the spoils of a superabundant merit, wherewith He decks and dignifies all His followers. And thus there is not only a remission, but a righteousness that has been wrought out by the expiation on the cross. It was there that He became sin for us, though He knew no sin; and it was also in virtue of what has been done there, that we are made the righteousness of God in Him. The hope of our glory, as well as the price of our deliverance, stands connected with the knowledge of Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

We affirm it to be of the very essence of gospel mercy, that, instead of a mere demonstration of Heaven's love, there went along with it a full demonstration of Heaven's righteousness—that it rendered glory to the law, and by the very act wherewith it rendered grace unto those who had trampled on the law. The forgiveness that is unto the sinner under this dispensation, bears upon it an awful character of sacredness and majesty—seeing that it never could have issued on a guilty world but through the channel of a consecrated priesthood, and with the blood of a divine expiation. There is pity on high to the children of men—but it is pity enshrined in holiness, and to which there is no other way of access than by the safeguards

of a government that is unchangeable. We cannot come unto the throne of grace but through a mediatorship, where at once may be seen the manifested truth and vindicated justice of the Godhead—nor can we obtain the compassion of our offended Lawgiver, without knocking at the door of a sanctuary, where dwell, in still unviolated purity and greatness, all the wondrous attributes that belong to Him.

Now, this is what we hold to be the leading and the characteristic peculiarity of the dispensation under which we live. All that we receive is, doubtless, in the way of a gift—and yet it is a gift for which a price has been rendered, so as to make it legally and rightfully ours. The penalty is remitted to us, but not till it was paid down, as it were, by another's sufferings. Heaven has been granted to us, but not till it was purchased by another's services. So that the believer has not merely privileges simply and gratuitously conferred upon him; but he is invested with a right to these privileges. He can lay claim to them as a thing of obligation—not in virtue of any equivalent that has been rendered by himself, but in virtue of a full equivalent that has been rendered by another. When eternal life is bestowed upon us, it is not in the shape of a bare donative, the fruit of a movement of generosity alone. It is a reward granted to us on consideration of a righteousness, although that righteousness is not properly and personally ours. Still, it is the fulfilment of a stipulation—the implementing of a contract or a covenant between parties; and when man enters

upon his blissful eternity, he only takes possession of that which is his due, and which God hath bound Himself, as by the conditions of a treaty, to award unto him.

And here it is of importance to mark—how much more secure our hope of heaven is, when laid upon such a foundation. Had the sinner nothing else to build upon than the single attribute of mercy, well might he dread the outbreaking upon his person of the other attributes, and feel the perpetual disturbance of fears and of jealousies in his bosom, as he bethought him of the majesty of God, and the unchangeable recoil of a nature that could hold no fellowship with evil. Now, how it must overrule these terrors, when, with the righteousness of Christ as a plea put into his hand, he now finds even the most menacing attributes of the Divinity enlisted on the side of his salvation. Were his hopes suspended singly on the pity of God, while the question of all his other perfections was yet undisposed of, there would still be room in the sinner's heart for many doubts and many disquietudes. But how it must allay all these, and what firmness it must give to his anticipations of heaven, when, instead of vaguely trusting for it to the indulgence of God, he in Christ hath acquired a distinct and a well-defined right to it. He is like the man who at first eyed some beautiful estate with fond and foolish expectation, because of the reported generosity of him who owned it—but who afterwards had the title-deed put into his hand, on which he might challenge the property as his own, and step into the secure and undisputed

possession of it. And thus may a Christian look forward to heaven. He can plead a right for it. He can argue in his behalf a purchase-money that is commensurate to the purchase. He can speak of a value that has been given, and which is adequate to the value that he expects. And he lives beneath his privileges—he is insensible to the whole worth and security of his condition, if his spirit do not rest and be at ease among the guarantees of a sure and a well-ordered covenant —and if, while he rejoices in the gift of his coming inheritance, he do not fortify his trust by thinking well of the soundness and the equity of his claim to it.

But while we like to say every thing to a believer that should minister to the stability of his confidence, we would say nothing that could minister to his pride, or excite a sense of haughty independence in his bosom. It is not as if he defied God, and entered with Him on a field of litigation. It is not as if he challenged, and with a tone of resolute assertion, that which he felt to be rightfully his own, and demanded it accordingly. What might disarm him of this spirit altogether is, that though now possessed of a right to the citizenship of heaven, the right was not won by himself, but conferred upon him by a Mediator. It is not an inherent, but a derived privilege, and for which he stands indebted to another's bounty. What, we ask, are the suitable feelings with which he ought to prosecute his claim upon God, when, in fact, God was the Being who furnished him with this claim against himself? God so loved the world, as to send His

Son into it, that He might legalize a place and a possession in heaven for all who believe on Him. Should the lordly proprietor make over to a tenant at will the privilege of a perpetual occupation, and give him secure and rightful possession of all the requisite title-deeds, and furnish him out of his own hand with the materials of such a plea or legal argument as might insure him against all opposition; all this goes to vest him with the power of challenging for his own, that which has been conferred upon him by another. But this, so far from impairing the character of what he has gotten as a gift, only serves to complete and to enhance it, and should humble him the more into the gratitude and admiration of so noble a benefactor. And so of all that we obtain by the gospel. It is a gift all over; and though it includes titles as well as benefits, let it ever be remembered, that they are not titles that we have earned, but titles that have been bestowed upon us. It is the thought of this that should rectify our carriage towards God. It is true, that by the economy of the New Testament, they who believe have a right to the honours of immortality. But the right has been given. It has generously and gratuitously descended from above; and they on whom it hath alighted, while they rejoice in the security thereof, still walk before God with the modesty of His gifted dependants. So far from being arrogant, because of the claim wherewith they have been invested, it only serves as another topic of humility and thankfulness. They appear before God in a robe of righteousness, but they know that it is a robe of His putting on.

In His presence they wear an order of merit, but what they wear another hath won—the meed of another's services—the fruit of the travail of another's soul. They feel the whole security of an unquestionable right without its arrogance, and are at once high in the conscious possession of their great prerogative, and humble under the feeling that they are debtors for it all. The reward is a gift; for the righteousness which hath earned the reward is a gift also. Heaven may at first be thought of, not as a present but as a purchase; but it is the more emphatically a present, that by another's purchase it has become justly and legally theirs. It is this which gives its specific character to the economy of the gospel. It is free in the distribution of its blessings; yet, ere the blessings are granted, there must be granted a right to the possession of them—and the sinner, having no such right in his own person, must derive it from abroad, and owe that to another, which in himself it is impossible to acquire. Heaven becomes his, not merely in love, but in law; and in consideration of Him who hath fulfilled the law, the bliss of eternity is as much awarded to him by a God of judgment, as it is made over to him by a God of mercy. Yet the law does not obliterate the love, but only makes it more prominent. For it was in love that God sent His Son into the world, and in love for the guilty did the Son, in their stead, obey all the precepts, and suffer all the penalties; and though without a righteousness none shall enter into paradise, yet was it love that provided the righteousness, and now presses it on the accep-

tance of all. None shall be admitted into heaven but from the vantage ground of a finished obedience; but it was God Himself who reared the vantage ground, and who placed the believer thereupon. The whole security of a righteousness is His, the whole glory of it is another's. That he shall have a righteousness is indispensable. For this there seems to have been some deep and awful necessity in the divine jurisprudence; and it has been so provided for, that now the sinner can rightfully claim, and God, without the compromise of His character as a Judge, can rightfully bestow. But the very thing which has established the sinner's plea, has deepened the sinner's obligations; and, in very proportion to the triumph which he feels because of the validity of his right, are both the gratitude and the self-renunciation wherewith, in the language of the Prophet, he makes the declaration—"In the Lord have I righteousness."

We shall close our remarks by adverting to a phrase that we often hear uttered, in the act of combating the resistance of man to the overtures of the gospel; and that is, *the legal spirit.* Now, if by this be meant the demand that nature has for a righteousness wherein to appear before God—this is just as it should be. There is, and there ought to be, a secret misgiving of the heart, when nothing but the general mercy of God is before us, on which to build our reliance. The thought of God's other attributes will intrude and mar the soul's attempt to tranquillize itself. The sense of a holy and unalterable law, whose demands must be met in one way or other, is ever present to the

conscience; and, without some adjustment in which it can repose, will leave it unsatisfied. There is a longing for the bliss of eternity, but at the same time a certain unutterable sense upon the heart, that without a something whereby the justice of God might be propitiated, and a homage might be done to the principles of a government that is lofty and unchangeable, this bliss can never be arrived at. We feel, that ere we can enter upon life everlasting, every legal penalty must be done away, and a sufficient legal plea be established on which to found our right of admittance before the throne of God. The notions and the feelings of jurisprudence are mixed up with our every speculation on the road to heaven; and it is the inextinguishable sentiment of every bosom, that, in order to man being inducted there, a something must be done upon which God might hold him to be righteous, and deal with him accordingly. A sense of the need of such a righteousness is universal, and is historically marked both by the sacrifices of heathenism, and by the manifold labours and formalities of superstitions both in and out of Christendom. There is the unexcepted sense of a great moral jurisdiction on the part of God over his creatures, and of a law which they are bound to observe—and of the need that there is, if men shall obtain the rewards and preferments of eternity at all, that the law shall give the authority of its consent, so that they may be legally and rightfully conveyed to him. Hence, under all the disguises of all the superstitions upon earth, the universal cry of man for a righteousness in order to find

acceptance with his God—a cry which the Bible does not resist, but to which it fully and explicitly responds, when it affirms of the sanctions of the law, that they are irreversible, and that heaven and earth must pass away rather than that one jot or one tittle of the law shall fail.

Now, it may serve to guide us out of all our perplexities, and to establish us on the right landing-place, did we see what is right, and accurately distinguish it from what is wrong in this legal spirit. In so far then, as the legal spirit prompts him by whom it is actuated, to seek for a legal right of admittance into heaven, we have nothing to say against it. It seems the general apprehension of nature, in all countries and in all ages, that there is no reaching a habitation of bliss and of divine favour through eternity, but by the stepping-stone of a righteousness—and this apprehension we hold to be a sound one. The error lies not in seeking such a righteousness, but in seeking it from the wrong quarter. The capital delusion is in attempting to build up a righteousness out of our own doings, instead of fleeing for shelter under the offered righteousness that has already been built up out of the doings of another. This is all that we hold to be wrong in the legal spirit; for, in as far as the mere attempt to make up a title-deed is concerned —in as far as the wish is felt to have a right of entry to the inheritance that is above put into our hands, which may be examined at the court of Heaven's judicatory, and be there sustained as in every way valid and constitutional,—this, for which nature every where has so strong an appetite, so

far from being denounced as wrong in Scripture, it is the great design of the gospel to meet and to satisfy. The object in the general is not wrong —though it is very possible that we may go miserably astray, by looking for it in a wrong direction. It is by looking for it in ourselves that we err so grievously, when we should look unto Jesus Christ, and say, in the words of the Prophet, "In the Lord have I righteousness." The errand upon which he came, was to bring a righteousness into the world, that each sinner who would, might lay hold of as his sacred and available plea for admittance into heaven. This is the righteousness that God hath ordained as the channel of approach, by which even the worst of transgressors may draw nigh; of which they are all invited to make confident mention in their prayers for acceptance; and on account of which God stands pledged to accept and to reward them accordingly. In the New Testament it is called the righteousness of God. It is not because of our desire for a righteousness that we are on the wrong path to heaven; but because, instead of submitting to this righteousness of God, we seek to establish one of our own. In a word, it is self-righteousness that is the great stumbling-block in our way. It is the vain enterprise of working an adequate and a satisfying merit out of our own obedience. It is challenging the inspection of our almighty Lawgiver, on a heart that has deeply revolted against him, and on a history deformed by transgressions innumerable—and bidding him look thereupon with complacency. It is labouring to arrive at rest by means of a degraded

law, brought down to the standard of our own weak and worthless compliances—and without homage to the purity and the unchangeableness of Heaven's government,—it is arrogating the rewards of heaven for our own polluted righteousness, as being in itself good enough for God. Now this is the tendency of nature against which the gospel hath set itself—not to thwart our demand for a righteousness, but to lay in the dust all confidence in a righteousness of our own,—and after having asserted the prerogatives of an outraged law, by laying the whole burden of its atonement and obedience on Him who hath suffered in our stead, and in our stead hath fulfilled all righteousness; to make open proclamation to our world, that all are welcome unto God—that now there is a way of access unto him, even for the most grievous of offenders,—but that this way is, and must be, under the cover of the great Mediatorship. You will breathe a new air, you will break forth on a scene of freedom and enlargement; all will be light, and love, and liberty, the moment that you can say, with the concurrence of your faith, "In the Lord have I righteousness:" and, feeling that nothing else will avail for Heaven's approbation, you can join the apostle in his sentiment, that, for the meritorious favour of God, I desire to count as nothing my own services: I desire and am determined "to know nothing else save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

We know of no Treatise better fitted to banish the legal spirit, or to dispossess the mind of its natural tendencies to establish a righteousness of

our own, than the excellent LETTERS of Mr ROMAINE which we have given in the present selection. The Letters were all addressed to friends, for whose spiritual welfare the author cherished a deep interest; and they were therefore designed to communicate comfort, or counsel, or direction, for resolving the doubts, or relieving the perplexities to which the Christian is exposed. To dissipate these doubts and perplexities, which he well knew originated most frequently in a self-righteous spirit, he continually directs their believing view to Jesus Christ. And well knowing that the manifestations of the love and grace of our heavenly Father, revealed to the soul by the blessed Saviour, could alone dispel the fears and the jealousies of nature, his constant aim was to point their eye, and direct their steps, to "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world." And thus, by the simple reliance of faith on the all-sufficient atonement and perfect righteousness of Christ, he directed them to find that peace and hope which could alone sustain their souls in the serenity of their confidence towards God, and to obtain those spiritual communications of grace, which could alone nourish the divine life within them, and carry them forward in a progressive course of sanctification and holiness, to render them meet for heaven. Richly experiencing these consolations and hopes in his own soul, and knowing the alone source from whence they were derived, the doctrine of the cross became the subject of his constant meditation, and the name of Jesus the much-loved theme on which he delighted to expatiate. Amidst all his difficul-

ties and perplexities, his confidence was stayed with the assurance that "the Lord reigneth;", and, by judging Him faithful who had promised, he maintained in his soul a rejoicing hope of eternal life, through his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It was thus that he maintained a perennial and unfading communion with God—that he daily and habitually rejoiced in the light of his reconciled countenance—that his gratitude and love were sustained in a strong and invariable glow—and that his sanctification and holiness were promoted. And no one can peruse the following Letters, without perceiving that the doctrines of free grace are doctrines according to godliness—that they serve no less to aliment the love and the obedience, than the peace and the joy of the believer—and that justification by faith in the Saviour's righteousness alone, forms not only the surest ground of hope, but the best security for an humble and holy devotedness of life to God.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

TO A

TREATISE ON THE FAITH AND INFLUENCE

OF

THE GOSPEL.

By the REV. ARCHIBALD HALL.

It is remarkable, that our Saviour, after foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, and giving the assurance that He will speedily come to avenge His elect, makes this solemn and awakening inquiry: "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" We cannot so far dive into the unrevealed secrets of prophecy, as to affirm how much, or how little, of analogy there is between the destruction of Jerusalem and the final dissolution of our world. It is impossible, in reading the woes and denunciations of our Saviour upon this subject, to rid ourselves of the impression, that there is a general resemblance between these two events. Both of them are described under the figure of the coming of the Son of man. At both of them there is a work of vengeance to be done, and a fell manifestation given of God's wrath against the finally and obstinately impenitent. In both an old economy is entirely swept away, and a new order of things emerges from the ruins

of it. But there is one point of the comparison, at which, instead of a likeness, we believe it to be the general apprehension of Christians, that there must be a strong dissimilarity. We are apt to look forward to a mighty spread and revival of the gospel in the latter days. Ere the day of judgment shall arrive, we count on the restoration of Jews, and the flocking in of Heathens, and the consummation of a great moral triumph over the world's blindness and depravity; and, in short, a whole species visibly awakened from the lethargy of nature, and turned, intently turned, on the things of eternity. Now, we dispute not that in our book of prophecy there is a warrant for all these expectations. But the difficulty is, how to find an adjustment between these high millennial hopes on the one hand; and on the other, the sudden and overwhelming surprise wherewith the last day is to come on an unbelieving world. If it be as applicable to the breaking up of our globe as it was to the breaking up of Jerusalem, that its coming is to be as a thief in the night, and that it shall bear with it a sudden destruction, on men steeped in the delusion of all around them being peace and safety, and that, wholly given over to earthliness, they shall be caught at unawares, while "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,"—if it be really true, that it is in the midst of holiday enjoyments, and among the songs of mirth and revelry, that the sound of the last trumpet shall be heard, and the Judge is to descend with the authority of a sudden arrest on all the pursuits and frivolities of a then unthinking generation, may it

not, after all, be true of this His latter visitation, as it was of His former one, that when the Son of man cometh He shall not find faith upon the earth?

Now we shall leave the difficulty where we found it—and instead of devising explanations for other men and other ages, let us try to ascertain in how far the rebuke of the Saviour is applicable to ourselves.

But ere we proceed, let us, in explanation of the term *faith*, advert to the wide distinction which obtains between the popular imagination of what it is, and the apostle's definition of what it is. The common conception about it is, that it consists in a correct apprehension of the truths of theology —or soundness of belief as opposed to error of belief. It appears to be a very prevalent impression, that faith lies in our judging rightly of the doctrines of the Bible—or that we have a proper understanding of them. And, in this way, the privileges annexed to faith in the New Testament, are very apt to be regarded as a sort of remuneration for the soundness of our orthodoxy. Heaven is viewed as a kind of reward, if not for the worth of our doings, at least for the worth and the justness of our dogmata. Under the old economy, eternal life was held out as a return to us for right practice. Under the new economy, is it conceived by many, that it is held out to us as a return for right thinking. Figure two theologians to be listed, the one against the other, in controversy. He who espouses error is estimated to be a heretic, and wanting in the faith. He who espouses truth, is estimated to be a sound believer, so that his faith

resolves itself into the accuracy of his creed. It is not, Do this, and you shall live—but it is, Think thus, and you shall live,—and this seems to be the popular and prevailing imagination of being saved by faith, and being justified by faith.

Now look to the apostolical definition of faith, as being the "substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen"—or as being that, which substantiates or realizes the things that we hope for, and which makes plain to our conviction the things that we do not see. It is the assured expectation of that which we hope for, and the assured conviction of that which we do not see—and lest any obscurity should be left to hang over this his description of faith, he exemplifies it by the history of many prophets and eminent worthies who had gone before him. In the reading of this catalogue, we find, that with all the instances, there was such a living power and truth given to the things that are distant and unseen, as caused them to overbear the impression of things that are visible, and of things that were at hand. The faith of these excellent ones, gave that character of certainty to invisible things, as made them to have the like influence upon conduct, that they would have had, though they had been so many near and besetting realities which the eye of sense could apprehend. And thus it is, that one of the patriarchs was moved to obedience by "things not seen as yet," and that another went forth looking to a "city which hath foundations," and that a third cherished the hope of a most unlikely fulfilment, resting it alone on the faithfulness of a divine Promiser, and that all of

them declared plainly, by their movements, how they sought a country. Abraham, by the offering up of Isaac, earning the triumph of hope over sense; and Isaac speaking with assurance of the things that were to come; and Moses having "respect unto the recompense of reward, and enduring as seeing Him who is invisible;" and many more who braved the most appalling cruelties, in hope of a better resurrection. In each of the instances, the apostle's definition was bodied forth, as it were, on the believers' history. The leading character of their faith, was just the assured expectation of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen. There was no quarrelling about orthodoxy. There was no settlement of any controversial question. The faith did not lie in the mere rectitude of any speculative opinion. It lay in a simple and undoubting anticipation of what an invisible God told of certain invisible things that were to come. And thus the future had the same practical ascendency over them, that the present has over other men. They walked by faith, and not by sight. They looked beyond the things that were seen and temporal, to the things that were unseen and eternal.

Now let us take this view of faith—let us look to it, not as the mere acquiescence of the understanding in the dogmata of any sound or recognised creed, but as that which brings the future and the yet unseen of revelation so home to the mind, as that the mind is filled with a sense of their reality, and actually proceeds upon it. Conceive it to be that which places the unseen Creator by the side of what

is visible and created, and so gives the predominancy to His will over all those countless diversities of influence, wherewith sense hath enslaved the vast majority of this world's generations. Or conceive it to be that which places eternity by the side of time, and so regards the one as a mere path or stepping-stone to the other; that the man whom it possesses actually moves through life in the spirit of a traveller, feels his home to be heaven, and all his dearest hopes and interests to be laid up there; walking, therefore, over the world with a more light and unencumbered footstep than other men, just because all its adversities to him are but the crosses of a rapid journey, and all its joys but the shifting scenery of the land through which he is travelling, and visions of passing loveliness. Keep by this definition of faith, and bear it round as a test among all the families of your acquaintance. Go with it to the haunts of every-day life, and see if it can guide you to so much as one individual, whose doings plainly declare that he is pressing onwards to an immortality, for the joys and exercises of which, he is all the while in busy preparation; and we fear, that even in this our professing age, faith is scarcely and rarely to be found; that nearly a universal species are carried through life in one tide of overbearing carnality; that the present world domineers over almost every creature that breathes in it; and were the Son of man now to descend in the midst of us, we know not how few they are who would meet and satisfy his inquiries after faith upon the earth.

For let there first pass under our review, that

mighty host who live in palpable ungodliness, who, if you cannot say of them that they are against God, are at least without God in the world; who spend their days, not perhaps in positive hostility, but certainly in most torpid apathy and indifference towards the Father of their spirits; who, feelingly alive to all the concerns of time, are dead and insensible to all that is beyond it. These indisputably are children without faith. Eternity is a blank in their imagination. They are alike unmoved by its hopes and by its fears, and it offers as little of influence to move them, as does that dark and unpeopled nothingness which lies beyond the outskirts of creation. The thought of a distant planet that rolls afar in space, carries in it no practical operation on their business or their bosoms. And the thought of some distant misery or happiness that may cast up in eternity, has just as little of practical operation over the minds of the vast majority of this world. That which lies between, acts as an insuperable barrier between the things of faith and their principles, whether of feeling or of action; and so it is that they can fetch, from the region which lies on the other side of the grave, no moving force which might practically tell on their hearts or on their history upon this side of it.

It were certainly premature and presumptuous to make these affirmations of all; but we leave it to your own observation, whether it does not apply, and in its full extent, to many of your friends or familiars in society—to many, and very many, who daily throng our markets, and sit around our boards

of festivity, and labour from morning to night among the cares of family management, and exchange the calls, and the salutations, and the inquiries of civil companionship; and whether in the pursuits of science, or merchandise, or amusement, are severally busy, each with a world of his own, from which God is shut out, and in which eternity is forgotten. Nothing can be more wide of apostolical faith than the spiritual frame and habit of these. They mind earthly things. They have no conversation in heaven. The world is their all, and it is within the compass of its visible horizon that their every wish and every interest lies. The terrors of another world do not agitate them. The hopes of another world do not enliven them. To both they are profoundly asleep, and that too at the very time when all within them is restless, and anxious, and astir about the matters of the short-lived day that is passing over them. This is the general description of all those who live without God and without hope. Does it apply to any of you? Then you may have honour, and decency, and kindness, and courtesy, and agreeable manners, and even exemplary morals, but you have no faith.

And it brings out this want of faith into more distinct exhibition, that they who exemplify it are so susceptible of a powerful impulse from futurity. It is not that we want the faculty of anticipation, for this, in fact, is the main-spring of all the activity that we see afloat in the world. Man lives on the prospect that is before him. It is in the pursuit of some distant advantage, or in the avoidance of some distant evil, that all his powers of

thought and action are expended. Were the machinery of his moral system capable of no impulse from futurity, then it might alleviate the charge that we prefer against him, when we state his life to be an idiot's dream, on the brink of an eternity, that, ere a few little days, will absorb him, an unsheltered and unprovided creature, into a receptacle of despair. But it only marks the more striking his blindness to the futurities of an eternal world, that he is so vigilant, and so busily alive to all the futurities of the present world —that he proves himself so eminently a creature of foresight in all that regards the pursuits or the interests of time, while this high characteristic of his nobler and loftier nature, seems to abandon him in all that regards the great concerns of immortality—that the very same man who can sit up late, and rise up early, for the purpose of building an earthly fortune in behalf of his children, and of his children's children, should never bestow the carefulness of half an hour on the fate and fortune of his own imperishable soul—that he who can regale his imagination with the perspective of thriving descendants, whom the wealth that he now accumulates is to grace and to ennoble, should never turn his eye to that grave in which his own body will then be mouldering, or to that land of condemnation in which his own desolate spirit will then wander in the nakedness of its unatoned guilt, and of its unchanged and unrenewed earthliness—that he who, in bequeathing to posterity, can stretch his mind forward to the time when his own name shall be forgotten, and the tomb-stone that covers

him shall have gathered upon it the mould of its distant antiquity,—that he who can thus devise and make disposition of his earthly treasure for centuries to come, should be so shut and fastened in all his sensibilities to a treasure in heaven, and an inheritance that fadeth not away. It is this busy excitement of his about the futurities of earth which brings out, by contrast, to more striking and surprising manifestation, the utter lethargy of his soul about those futurities of an everlasting condition that are so sure to overtake him. It is this which gives its most conclusive demonstration of Nature's apathy, and Nature's blindness, and prepares us for the announcement, that when the Son of man cometh he may not find faith upon the earth.

But let us pass onward to a class of somewhat different aspect from that of the palpably regardless; who have been so far mindful of religion as to put on its decencies, and at least its public devotions; who fill their Sabbath pew on every recurring occasion, with the members of a well-trained and well-mustered family, of whom we will grant that their presentation at church, is just a thing as regular and sure as the tolling of the bell that summons them; who are ever in their places at the periodic celebration of our great Christian festival; and who, even in addition to their Sabbath and their sacramental observances, have such a style of worship and of exercise at home as is in perfect keeping with their more ostensible proprieties. One would imagine of such quiet, and orderly, and church-going men, that truly they are

walking with a pilgrim step to another and a happier land; that it was not the happiness of the present, but the hope of the future which concerned them; that instead of being taken up with the fleeting interests of sense, they were indeed taken up with those distant and unseen things, by the power of which it is that we estimate their condition as believers; that so many goodly symptoms, in the way of form, and ordinance, and manifold compliance with the established usages of Christianity, argued them to be indeed of the faith—and, at all events, that, in respect of moral and spiritual characteristics, they are of a species altogether distinct from those infidels who disown the gospel, or those ungodly who despise it.

And yet it is most true, that all this seeming sanctity may consist with an entire and unbroken habit of worldliness; that all this clock-work religion may stand as little connected with the aspirings of a mind that is heavenly, as do the routine evolutions of any piece of mechanism; that the keeping of all the Sabbath punctualities, may argue no more a heart set on the things that are above, than would the putting on of our Sabbath vestments; and the church, and the sacrament, and the family exercises, taking their respective places in the round of many a sober citizen, along with his busy shop, and his comfortable meals, and his parties of agreeable fellowship, may, one and all of them, be only so many varieties of earthliness. It is really so very possible to have gotten, whether by inheritance or by accident, into a habit of unvaried regularity, and to have a kind of con-

science about it too, and to feel a violence done to our religious sensibilities, whenever it is broken in upon, and to have persevered so long in a certain style of observation, that a positive discomfort is suffered, should any inroad be made upon it—it is so possible, that all this may meet, and be at one, with the downward tendencies of a heart which is altogether of the earth, and earthly. It does not follow, that because a man of forms, he is therefore a man of faith. There may be much without him that bears upon it the aspect of religiousness, while there is nought within him of "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." He differs, it is true, from the Sabbath breaker, and the profane absentee from all our ordinances; but the difference may be altogether complexional. To superinduce the ordinances of the gospel on a man's history, is one thing; that they should spring from a spontaneous affection for the gospel in a man's heart, is another. The example of parents may have superinduced them; or the force of natural habit may have done it; or a taste for the decencies of family regulation may have done it,—and thus it often holds practically true, that the punctuality of his Sabbath worship may no more argue him a disciple or an expectant of immortality, than does the punctuality of his morning walk. And, accordingly, we fear it to be true of many such, that, with all their external tribute at the altar of piety, there is nought of the living spirit of piety in their bosoms—that they stand as firmly riveted to the dust of our perishable world, as do the most profane and profligate of

their fellows—that their hearts are just as much with the interests of a passing scene, and in every way as naked of all influence from the things of eternity. So that were you to follow many a pains-taking and assiduous formalist, throughout the line of his week-day movements, you would say of him, too, that the world was his home, and heaven but the vision or the entertainment of his fancy—that nought, either of substance or of evidence, stood associated with his thoughts of futurity on the other side of death—that, wanting this, he wanted all that could really signalize him from earthly men, as a traveller toward Zion—that all which could be alleged of his observations or his prayers, only proved him to wear the livery of the faithful, without their spirit or their character: for, look to him diligently, and you will find him to be just as intent on lucre, as keen in bargains, as busy and breathless in all the pursuits of merchandise, as agonized by the crosses of misadventure, as enraptured at the sight of profits and of snug accumulations; in a word, not only as laborious with his hand, but, more material still, as wholly given over, with his heart, to the pursuits and interests of a short-lived day, as are the great bulk, and common-place, of our ordinary men.

But, again, if faith, in the apostle's sense of it, cannot be ascribed to the openly regardless, and cannot be ascribed to those seemingly religious, whose only homage to the cause is that of their personal attendance upon its decencies and its forms—ought it not, at least, to be ascribed to another and a higher class—even to those who are zealous

for the faith? It might well be imagined, of him who thinks to purchase heaven by his works of devoteeship, that, all scrupulous as he is of Sabbath and sacramental proprieties, he may still be wanting in the faith. But, can this be alleged of him who has oft been heard to speak of faith and of works together—and who, after argumenting the utter worthlessness of the latter, has confined most rigidly to the former all of power and of efficacy that there is in the business of salvation? How is it, that the man who ever and anon pronounces on the vanity of his own righteousness, and professes the righteousness of Christ, as appropriated and laid hold of by faith, to be the alone plea on which a sinner can be justified—how is it that he can, at the same time, be destitute of faith? Surely, if faith is to be found at all upon our earth, it must be among those men of a jealous and stickling orthodoxy, who are ever on the alert, and on the alarm, when human morality lifts its pretensions against the supremacy of faith, and offers presumptuously to usurp, or to derogate, from its honours. Where is faith to be met with, if not among its own professed and earnest advocates?—and how can the credit of faith be denied to those, who say, they hold by it alone as their passport to heaven, and that to it alone they look for being justified?

To know, and to think, that a man is justified by faith, is one thing: actually to have that faith, is another. One may know, that he who possesses a certain title-deed, has the property of certain lands—but this is wholly different from his being himself the possessor of it. Your religious know-

ledge may qualify you for enumerating all the powers and privileges which belong to faith—but it does not therefore follow, that this faith actually belongs to you. It is but a distant connexion to have with an earthly estate, that you know what sort of rights they are, by the holding of which it becomes the property of the owner. This you may know most thoroughly, and yet have no personal interest in the rights or in the property whatever. And distant, indeed, is your connexion with heaven, if you but know, how it is by faith that man acquires a part and an inheritance therein. The question recurs, Have you that faith? It is not of your knowledge, or your opinion, that we at present inquire. You may know that faith justifies a man, and yet have no faith whatever of your own. It may be a favourite dogma, this article of justification; and you, having the dogma, yet wanting the faith, may have no justification. You may embrace, and with fond affection too, the sound doctrines upon this subject, and yet not, by any faith of your own, have actually embraced the righteousness of Christ: and so this doctrine of theology may be of as little avail toward the peace and joy of your eternity, as any doctrine of politics, or of philosophy, or of agriculture.

Neither is it enough, that you assert with vehemence, and abide with most opinionative tenacity by, the right doctrines of justification. Who has not witnessed the very same vehemence, and the very same tenacity, on other fields of speculation? All that ardour, and earnestness, and intolerance of what is pronounced to be damnable error, which

are so often exhibited in theological controversy, may often be resolved into the pride of argument, the impatience of defeat, the jealousy of other powers and other understandings. These are the principles which uphold the zeal and strenuousness of so many combatants on the arena of a merely secular debate, and make each so resolute in the affirmation and defence of his own dogma. And on no other principles may you have taken your side on the agitated question of our acceptance with God; and may have urged it with most intense affection and energy, that this acceptance hangs upon faith, and upon it alone. This you may do, and yet be personally without the faith yourself—a fierce and eager partizan, and on the right side too, of this evangelical warfare—though, within the receptacles of your moral system, there be nought of "the substance of things hoped for," and nought of "the evidence of things not seen."

We think that, on the first blush and aspect of it, the thing is quite palpable to the eye of general observation. It is surely an oft-exemplified phenomenon, that a man should be quite sturdy in his adherence to the orthodox creed, and yet be all the while a man of earthly pursuits and earthly affections. He may lay claim to the dogmata thereof, as all his own,—and yet the living realities of which they treat, may never have impressed one touch of their practical and persuasive ascendency over him. His mouth may be filled with the language, and his understanding be busied with the arguments, of orthodoxy, and yet the spiritual things, of which words are but the representatives

and the symbols, may never once have come into living play, either with the purposes of his life, or with the affections of his still unregenerated bosom. He may stand up for all the articles, and yet be standing up for mere phraseology, and nothing more. It may be a mere germ of curiosity, or imagination, with the terms of theology; while the truths of it have never once stood before the eye of his conscience, clothed in all the urgent and impressive characters of their high bearing upon his everlasting welfare. They may have never, indeed, carried him forward to any one of those futurities, to which he will be so speedily conducted, by the flight of those successive years that roll over him. The coming death, and the coming judgment, and the coming eternity, may all be unheeded, and at the very moment, too, when he is agitating the terms on which death is plucked of its sting, and judgment is disarmed by mercy, and an avenue to the bliss of eternity is again opened for those sinners who had cast it away from them. The urgencies of the present world may enslave him, even while the concerns of the future world are to him the topics, both of busy thought and busy conversation. The matters of God's kingdom may be quite familiar to him in word, which never are felt by him in their power. They have had interest enough to attract his gaze, but not energy enough to move his practice. They play, in speculation, around his fancy or his head, but they have never yet stimulated him to action; and while his talk is of the mysteries of heaven, his path in life is that of a devoted worldling.

There may be something in the apostolical definition of faith that is fitted to expose, and perhaps to remedy this delusion. It is such a faith as, at least, carries hope in its train. It has for its object such things as are hoped for—that is, hoped for to the individual himself. One may believe of a thousand things in which he personally has no share and no interest—but hope implies a certain degree of appropriation. It may be easy to give a general consent to the truth—that, by Christ the Saviour, the gate of heaven has been opened for sinners—but, by the faith of our text, the sinner sees the gate of heaven to be open for himself; and so he rejoices in the bright anticipation, and betakes himself to all the required and preparatory movements for his entrance thereinto. One can imagine, that the report of a Saviour for the sinners of another country, would carry in it none of the personal excitement of hope, and none of the personal exertion correspondent thereunto, to the sinners of our own land. And yet it is conceivable, that this message of a distant salvation for others, and in which we ourselves had no individual concern, might busily engage our speculations, and be the topic amongst us of a very intent controversy; and might arrange us into parties, according to the interpretation that we gave of the terms, on which God took into acceptance the strayed children of this remote branch of his family. And thus, one class of our home theologians might think truly, and have the sound opinion, on this matter; and so have their minds imbued with the accurate

belief. Yet, from the nature of the thing, it is a belief which carries no hope along with it—and just, we apprehend, such a belief as is to be met with among many of the actual zealots of orthodoxy in our present day. They treat the matter, it is to be feared, as a thing that lies remote from themselves—as a mere theme for the understanding; which they look to as they would to any other abstract contemplation, but which they do not look to as that which bears, specifically and distinctly, upon their own interest. Whatever faith they have, is a faith without hope—but this is not the faith of our text. This is not the assured expectation of things hoped for. This is not the case of a man, who hath closed with the overtures of the gospel for himself; and is looking onward to heaven, not merely as a place that has been opened, by a Redeemer's hand, for a certain number of travellers, but a place that has been opened for him, as one of these travellers. This would change the character of his faith. This would turn him from a controversialist into a pilgrim. In the former view of it, there was nought addressed but his intellect. The latter view of it, offers that which is addressed to his affections and his hopes —which opens for himself a vista into heaven; and, revealing to him the holiness, both of the habitation, and of the highway that leads to it, instantly betakes him unto the way of holiness.

There are two questions which, could we answer in a way that might be readily apprehended, would go far to satisfy you, as to the process by which

a real principle of faith in the mind, is followed by the life of faith in the history—so as to land every honest believer of the present day, in those very activities which signalized the patriarchs of the old dispensation, and separated them, by a holy and a heavenward walk, from the general habit of an unbelieving world.

The first of these questions is—By what stepping-stone is a believer conducted from his faith to his hope? What is there, in the Christian message, that warrants him to single out heaven as the distinct object of his own journeyings through the world, and his own preparations for it, as a place whither he might bend his footsteps, and to which he might look forward, as the home and the resting-place of his own special expectations? Had it been a message of salvation only to the people of another land, he might have put faith in it without drawing hope from it. And how is the message actually constructed, so as that the faith, which he places therein, should light up the animating sentiment of hope in his bosom?

Were the gospel but a message of salvation to some foreign land, there would be no link by which faith might pass into hope. And neither would this transition follow, were it only a message to some of our own neighbourhood, exclusive of ourselves. But this is not the bearing of the message. It carries a tender of salvation to all. It points the eye of each, and of every man, to an open heaven, and invites him to enter thereinto. By such terms as, *all*, and *any*, and *every*, and *whosoever*, it brings

its offers of reconciliation most specifically to bear on each unit of the human population. Insomuch that, if the word of salvation hath come to him, the offer of salvation hath been made to him. Just as much as if not another individual but himself had stood in need of Christ's propitiation, is the whole benefit of that propitiation pressed upon his acceptance. Just as much as if he had been the solitary and the sinful occupier of the only world where rebellion against heaven was known, and as if the Bible had been constructed for the one purpose of reclaiming him to the friendship of his offended God, has that Bible come to his door, armed with the full force of its importunities and its calls. It is as legitimately his right to take to himself the call of reconciliation that is sounded there, as if put into his hand by an angel from the sanctuary, with a special bidding, from heaven's Lord, that he should read, and should rejoice in it. It is true, that this is not the way in which the message is actually brought home; and that, instead of this, the everlasting Gospel is preached unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. But, while thus it goeth forth diffusively over all, it sendeth out a voice which speaketh distinctly unto each; and, in virtue of the terms that we have now specified, does it happily combine, a wide expansion of itself over the face of the world, with a pointed application of itself to every heart, and to every habitation. That faith may become hope, nothing more is necessary, than to believe in the message, accord-

ing to the sense of the message. It is to believe with understanding. It is to put the right interpretation on these simple words, *all*, and *any*, and *every*. It is to conceive of myself, that surely I am within the scope of a vocabulary, which is comprehensive of the whole species, and not exclusive of a single member belonging to it. I cannot believe in the announcement, that Christ "tasted death for every man," without rejoicing in this, that He hath tasted death for me. I cannot have faith in the invitation, "Let whosoever will, come and drink of the water of life freely," without feeling of myself, that I have been made the object of a marked and separate entreaty. It is thus that there is a hope of faith, as well as a hope of experience. There is a hope that hangs direct on the faithfulness of God. The man who argues on the side of orthodoxy, and feels not his personal interest therein, is blind to the important significancy of those very terms in which the doctrines of the Bible have been conveyed to him. He either knows them not, or attends to them not. All that we want for the lighting up of hope is faith, with understanding; and only grant it to be an intelligent faith, and then will it be the assured expectation of things hoped for.

But there is another question which must be answered, ere we can complete the analogy between the state of an expectant under the old, and of an expectant under the new dispensation. We can perceive how a hope—a hope of his own individual preferment to blessedness and glory, may arise in

the bosom of each, from the terms in which both the Jewish and the Christian message was conveyed to all who stood within reach of the hearing of them. But it might be imagined of this hope, that it should simply find an entrance into the heart, and there minister of its own sweet and placid sensations to the inner man. What is there in it that should put into motion the intercourse, or connect the faith of a believer with that new and busy career of activity on which he forthwith embarks himself? We can understand how a Christian, like Abraham of old, might see his day of triumph afar off and be glad. But what is there in the mere belief of the things which have been told unto him, and in his assured expectation of those things that should liken his history to that of Abraham, who, at the bidding of a voice from heaven, submitted himself to the toils and the trials of a new obedience? We can see how the faith of the gospel might germinate that specific anticipation of heaven, which might give to the mind of a Christian all the spiritual elevation of Abraham? But by what distinct impulse is it that this faith originates a personal movement on the part of its disciple, so as that he shall walk in the footsteps of his father Abraham? We now understand the pathway between faith and hope. We now want to understand the pathway between faith and service—and how it is that the hope which gladdens alike the patriarch of the old, and the believer of the new economy, should further stimulate them alike to the same exertions and the same sacrifices.

Now, as it was by looking to the terms of the message, according to the meaning of these terms, that we attempted to trace the connexion between faith and hope; so it is in this, and in no other way, that we would trace the connexion between faith and obedience. The accompaniment of such a term as that of "whoever," with the invitation of the gospel, gives me to understand of that invitation as directed specifically to myself, and my heart responds to it accordingly. And the accompaniment of such a sentence with the same invitation, as that "he who turneth to Christ must depart from his iniquities," gives me to understand, that while I look to heaven with the delightful sensation of hope in my bosom, I must also look to it with the diligence of an intent and busy traveller, who knows that in moving thitherward, he must move himself away from the habit and character and earthly desires of a world lying in wickedness. This is the way, and we know of no other, by which faith and obedience are so linked together, as that when the one enters the heart, the other forthwith comes out on the history. It is done by the power of a whole faith in a whole testimony. It is by keeping the ear of the mind open to the whole utterance of that voice which hath spoken to us from heaven. It is by treating God's communications as Abraham of old did. When he heard God say, "This is the land which I give unto thee," he rejoiced in hope; and when He heard him say, "Walk thou before me, and be thou perfect," he went forth in obedience. And so with the Christian, who can,

both look with glad anticipation to eternal life as the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, and who can labour with assiduity for the same eternal life, as knowing that the unholy and the unheavenly shall never enter thereinto. It is the word which causes him to hope—and it is also the word which causes him to obey. It at one time is the word of promise, and at another the word of authority—and he, an honest believer, listens to both, and proceeds upon both. With the docility of a little child, he accommodates his responses to the lesson that is set before him—and, at one and the same time, is he the most joyful in hope and the most devoted in service.

To illustrate and enforce this latter and most important topic, forms the principal subject of the following excellent Treatise of the Rev. ARCHIBALD HALL, "*On the Faith and Influence of the Gospel.*" His great design is to elucidate the nature of true faith, and to show its practical influence on the heart and character of the believer. The attentive reader will not fail to perceive, that a real and appropriating faith of the truths of the gospel is a very different thing from the mere mental perception of these truths, or the cold and intellectual abstractions about which the mind may be busied, but which minister neither peace nor hope to the mind, nor exert any sanctifying or subduing power over the heart and affections.

There are no two terms in the whole New Testament, which stand more frequently and familiarly associated with each other, than faith and

obedience. Wherever the privileges and blessings of the gospel are truly appropriated by faith, the precepts of the gospel maintain their authority over the conduct of the believer. Whenever the peace of the gospel takes up its residence in the heart, the practice of the gospel comes out in living exemplification on the personal character and accomplishments of the believer. It is thus that faith demonstrates its existence in the heart, by its operation on the character. It forms, indeed, the principal excellence of the following Treatise, that it exhibits the intimate connexion which subsists between faith and obedience. It shows, that though faith be a simple principle, yet the object of faith is the whole testimony of God. That faith has to do not merely with one set of truths, but that it has to do with all the truths which are contained in the whole of God's revelation. That while the truth, that "Christ died for our sins," exerts its appropriate influence on the mind of the believer, and he is thus made to feel the charm of the peace-speaking blood of Christ, the truth, that "without holiness no man can see the Lord," also exerts its appropriate influence on his mind; and he is thus urged on to "perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord." When the believer is made to know, that "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus," he is also made to know, that "they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." It is thus that his mind comes under the various influences, which the various truths of God's testimony are fitted to

exercise over it; and while he is a trusting and rejoicing disciple, he is, at the same time, a watchful, praying, and obedient disciple.

But faith, by opening up a new region of manifestation to the mind of a believer, brings his heart into contact with those motives and influences which give rise to the new obedience of the gospel. When contemplating Jesus Christ and him crucified, he builds on this all his hopes of acceptance before God, he finds not only peace, but a purifying influence descend on his heart. It removes the spirit of bondage and of fear, which weighed down the soul to the inactivity of despair, and introduces the spirit of love and adoption, which makes him run with alacrity in the way of all God's commandments. So long as the question of his guilt remained unsettled, instead of loving, he could only dread, the Being whom he had offended; but when a sense of forgiveness enters his heart, he enters, with hopeful and assured footsteps, on a course of cheerful obedience. When love to God, which the consciousness of guilt kept away, is introduced into his soul by faith in the atoning blood of Christ, the inspiration of a new and invigorating principle takes possession of the believer, and he becomes animated with the life and the love of real godliness. Faith in the doctrine of the atonement is as much the turning point of a new character, as of a new hope. It is here gospel obedience takes its commencement, because it is here that filial love and confidence in God take their rise. Christ came not only to redeem us from all iniquity,

but to "purify us unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The reception of Christ is always accompanied with the gift of the renewing Spirit, whose peculiar office it is to promote our growth in grace, and to perfect us in holiness; and the genuine believer will always experience the truth and the reality of the apostle's declaration— "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

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